

A Community and User-based Site
Development Plan for Myrtle Forest Picnic
Area, Tasmania: Theory and Practice

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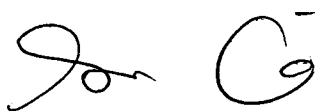
'The Myrtle and sassafras trees used to be so thick and high that when you walked along the track you could not see the sky, and it was so beautiful you almost spoke in whispers'

(Appeldorf, 1986:7)



STATEMENT OF AUTHENTICITY

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no copy or paraphrase of material previously published or written by other persons except when due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'S' followed by a cursive 'I' and a large 'G'.

Supaporn Ingkhaninan

ABSTRACT

Myrtle Forest Picnic Area lies within the Recreation Zone of Wellington Park, Tasmania. The need for a Site Development Plan to provide recreational facilities for visitors at locations within the Zone had been discussed in a Park management plan in 1997, and local people and Park managers had also met since to propose certain possibilities for Myrtle Forest. This thesis presents both the results of my role as a participant researcher in the consultant study team that undertook production of the plan, and my position as an observer researcher who set out to evaluate the stakeholder consultation components of the planning process. Myrtle Forest Picnic Area became my case study.

In my first role, my tasks were to collect Myrtle Forest biophysical and cultural baseline data, conduct a community survey using questionnaires, and interview key management agency representatives. Both qualitative and quantitative approaches were employed.

My survey revealed that the site has a relatively high level of use from the local community, especially the immediate neighbours, but people from elsewhere also visit. Site users rated the quality of existing visitor facilities as “fair”, but said that improvements and additions were needed. In particular, they wanted to see toilets, barbecue facilities, and site information. The worst problem identified at the site was vandalism. Key informants from the relevant agencies indicated that the planning exercise was most important for future development of the area, and also saw vandalism as the issue of most concern.

In my second role, I acted as observer researcher in all the stakeholder consultation stages during data collection for the Site Development Plan, including my own survey and interviews. From the literature, I developed a set of criteria for evaluating participatory planning of this kind. The analysis revealed that the consultation program met some of the criteria, but not all. Considering its time and financial

constraints, the consultation program was a fairly good and reasonable process, however. Nevertheless, with reference to the literature, the participatory program can be seen as being relatively tokenistic. Within its limitations, and attempting to be realistic, I made suggestions for improvement for other natural area site planning projects at this scale. These included ensuring transparency by making the work program itself and the decision-making process subject to public inputs; keeping stakeholders informed of important facts and situations, especially if changes occur and if stakeholders are likely to be affected; and setting up a planning project steering/decision-making committee with at least half its members drawn from participating communities.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This thesis presents research for producing a Site Development Plan (SDP) for the Myrtle Forest Picnic Area, largely based on a community consultation program. The Myrtle Forest Picnic Area is within the City of Glenorchy Local Government Area, just north of Hobart, Tasmania. My research also consists of another major component, however: an evaluation of the consultation program that was implemented. Following sections of this chapter explain the beginning of the project and how I became involved. Aims and objectives of the research are also addressed.

1.1 SDP Setting and Context

The initiative for the SDP originated from an aim to provide recreational facilities for visitors discussed in the *Wellington Park Management Plan 1997* (the Plan) (Wellington Park Management Trust (WPMT, 1997:43 [“the Trust” in the text and “WPMT” in citations])). The Myrtle Forest Picnic Area lies within the Recreation Zone of Wellington Park as noted in the Plan (WPMT, 1997:17). The Recreation Zone provides access for relatively high use nature based tourism and recreation in natural settings in the Park. Unlike major tourist spots in the Park, the Myrtle Forest Picnic Area is relatively small. It is recommended in the Plan for potential development as a ‘low-key recreation node’. Myrtle Forest could also provide an alternative recreation space to reduce pressure on other major areas in Wellington Park. The location of the Park is shown in Figure 1.1.

The Myrtle Forest Picnic Area is in a northern part of Wellington Park (see Figure 1.2). The Picnic Area is a very popular site, especially for people residing nearby. It is also the starting point for a number of day walks within the more remote parts of Wellington Park. Located near Collinsvale, Myrtle Forest is a key entry point to Wellington Park at its northern boundary, and is promoted as the only nature based

tourist destination within the City of Glenorchy (Bidwell, M. 2003, pers. comm., 12 Nov.). The Myrtle Forest Picnic Area is managed by the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS), which has responsibility for most of the Park. Some water catchment areas, however, are covered by the Glenorchy City Council (GCC), and the Hobart City Council (HCC), as in Figure 1.2.

Figure 1.1: Location of Wellington Park

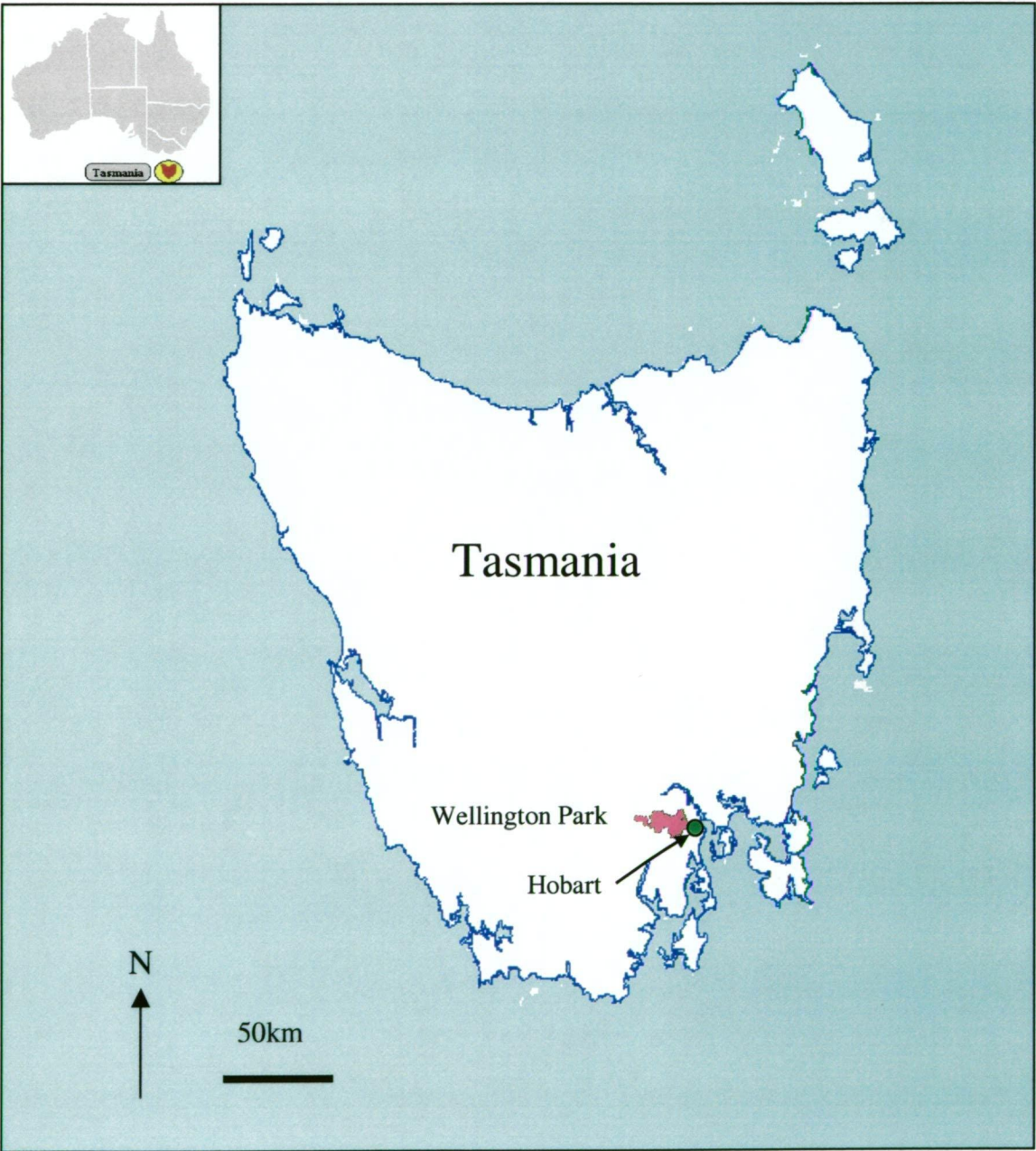
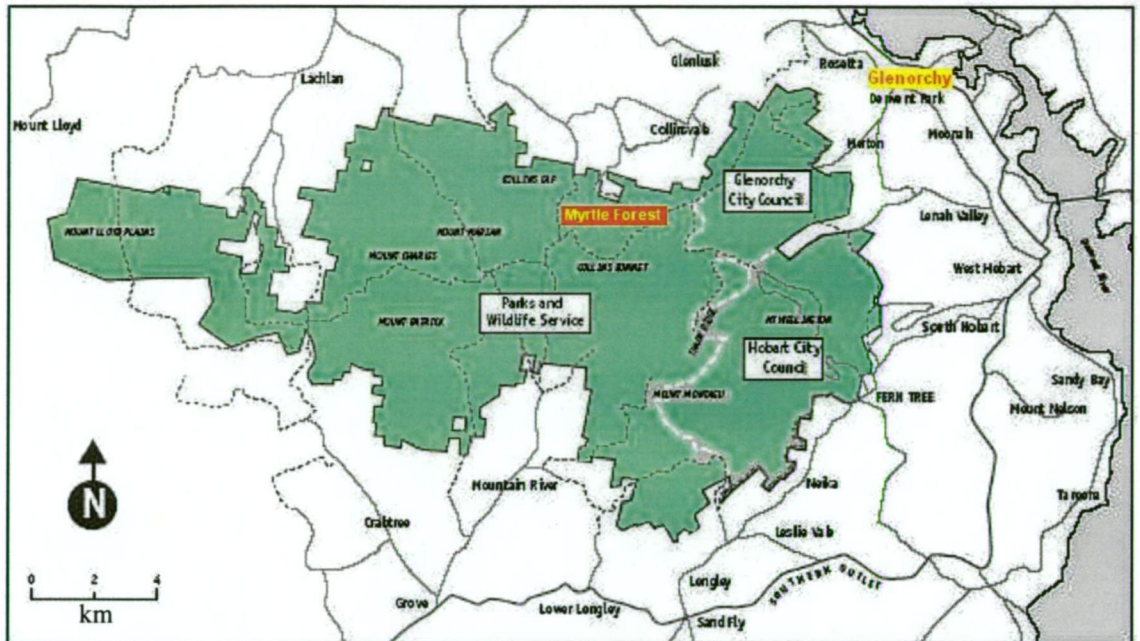


Figure 1.2: Location of Myrtle Forest Picnic Area in Wellington Park in relation to central Glenorchy (with white boxes showing relevant management authorities)



(Source: WPMT, 1997)

The area of interest for the SDP consists of the Myrtle Forest Picnic Area itself and perhaps up to about 1.5ha of surrounding bushland. The area is relatively small compared to other major recreation places and the 18 250ha of the Wellington Range that comprise the Park, and is in a fairly narrow gully setting. Two small car parks are provided for park users (see Figure 1.3). The first is on the right hand side of the road about 300m before arriving at the Picnic Area up the hill. It holds about five or six vehicles. The other is next to the picnic area and can support only a very few vehicles as space is needed for reversing cars. For the visitor standing in the top car park and looking up the gully towards the walking track, the picnic shelter is on the left-hand side of the area and Myrtle Forest Creek runs alongside the picnic area to the right and to the right of Myrtle Forest Road downstream. Two sets of tables and benches are to be found in the shelter. The shelter is constructed of timber and there is evidence of vandalism. The wooden bridge at the top right corner of the Picnic Area is the starting point of the walking track to Collins Bonnet, Collins Cap, and the more distant parts of Wellington Park. Apart from the shelter, there are no other picnic facilities, and no toilets or any other public amenities (see Figure 1.4).

Figure 1.3: Diagram of upper part of access road to Myrtle Forest Picnic Area (not to scale)

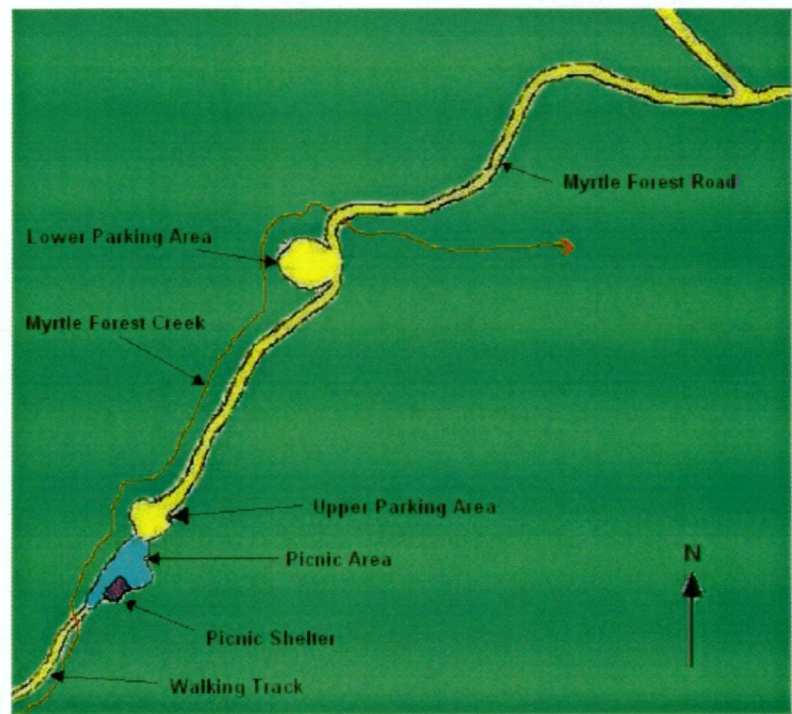


Figure 1.4: Myrtle Forest Picnic Area (with bridge at the start of the bushwalking track just visible at the end of the wider formed path)



1.2 How the Project was Initiated

The very first stage of the Myrtle Forest SDP began with a meeting of representatives from GCC, the PWS, the Trust, and the Collinsvale/Glenlusk Precinct Committee¹, well before I became involved. The meeting was held in May 2002: its purpose was to define more clearly the management responsibilities for the Myrtle Forest Picnic Area, as well as its infrastructure needs. The meeting also aimed to discuss options for developing the site as a tourism destination. It was agreed in the meeting that the SDP would be the most important step in managing the Myrtle Forest Picnic Area (Bidwell, 2002).

Six months afterwards, the Steering Committee for the Myrtle Forest SDP was set up. The Steering Committee comprises Michael Bidwell from the GCC, Michael Easton from the Trust, Glen Kowalik and Ian Wade from the Collinsvale/Glenlusk Precinct Committee, and Grant Hall from the PWS. The meeting was arranged in November 2002. It was agreed to appoint Michael Easton to prepare a Project Brief for Steering Committee members to review and assess. The Project Brief was drawn up, with input from the GCC, in December 2002. The Brief was based upon a previous contract for a similar site development plan in the Pinnacle Zone of Wellington Park (Easton, M. 2003. pers. comm., 12 Nov.). After review, the Project Brief was finalized at a meeting of the Steering Committee on 27 February 2003 (Bidwell, 2003).

The proposed project fee was very low, and tenders were not required. Instead, the Steering Committee selected Inspiring Place Consultants, with a team led by John Hepper, to do the work. This decision was made because John Hepper had experience in developing the “Wellington Park Walking Track Strategy” (WPMT, 2003), the “Pinnacle Zone Site Development Plan” (WPMT, 2001), and the “Wellington Park Bike Strategy” (WPMT, 1999), and has been involved in other management plans for the Park. The team usually comprised John Hepper and Carl

¹ The City of Glenorchy is organized into a number of community-based geographical precincts.

Turk, landscape architect, but occasionally was expanded by other employees of Inspiring Place to achieve wider inputs. After Inspiring Place Consultants agreed to work on the project, John Hepper responded and commented on the draft Project Brief on January 2003. After his input, the Project Brief was finalized (Bidwell, 2003).

Meanwhile, the Steering Committee and Inspiring Place Consultants also had discussions on involvement by the University of Tasmania because the Consultants would need assistance in view of the low fee. Student involvement was suggested at the very first meeting in May 2002 (Bidwell, 2002). Following these discussions, a student was sought to assist with the project. As a Masters candidate, I decided to take part in the project and had the very first meeting with the Steering Committee and the Inspiring Place team in early July 2003. The duration of the process from Project Brief to the author joining the project was around eight months. The July meeting was followed by site inspections at the Myrtle Forest Picnic Area by the Steering Committee in the same month. John Hepper took the leading role in organizing the project timetable. As part of the Inspiring Place team, I was to be responsible for gathering key data to be applied in producing the SDP, and also accepted the role of participating with Inspiring Place in other processes necessary before the drafting of the SDP.

1.3 Double Roles

As a Masters candidate, I chose to incorporate the project into my thesis and became a participant in the Inspiring Place study team's data gathering phases. The data I was to be responsible for was desktop baseline information for the site, site-user surveys, and key agency interviews. These tasks are listed under Phase 2 (Research and Fieldwork) and Phase 3 (Stakeholder Consultation) in John Hepper's Work Program Stage 1 for the SDP, shown in Appendix A. My involvement also included fully participating in all the other key tasks in Phases 1-3 of the Work Program Stage 1 as a team member, and most of Phase 4 (Issues and Options Identification). My

participation in these other tasks was not designed to report data as further inputs to the SDP, however, unlike my tasks for the baseline study, site user survey, and agency interviews.

Because the project is also a thesis, a theoretical context is necessary. To give my work more depth, I undertook the task of evaluating the stakeholder consultation program for the SDP and realized that this demanded an understanding of relevant theories of planning. In order to critically analyze and judge the process, I also needed to take on the role of observer. I thus became a “participant researcher/observer researcher” in the process of developing the SDP for the Myrtle Forest Picnic Area. My position and roles are explained further in Chapter Two, covering methodology and methods used.

1.4 Research Objectives

My first aim was defined by the Work Program proposed by Inspiring Place Consultants and approved by the Steering Committee. As a participant researcher, my first aim was *to implement major parts of the stakeholder consultation phase of the Work Program (the user survey and the agency interviews), and to collect and report on baseline data for the site as inputs to the SDP*. I also saw my participation in the other tasks in the Work Program as supporting this research role, since working as part of the team would deepen my understanding, though most direct benefits would apply to my second aim. In order to achieve my first aim, several objectives followed:

- collect baseline biophysical and indicative cultural data about Myrtle Forest to be used to identify implications for management;
- develop best-practice methods where I have primary responsibility for survey and interview data gathering, i.e., for questionnaire design and implementation, and semi-structured interview questions for a number of key informants, even though the overall stakeholder consultation framework had already been set by Inspiring Place Consultants;

- implement the survey and the key informant interviews to determine major issues related to levels of use and aspirations for the future of Myrtle Forest; and
- participate in all other aspects of the stakeholder consultation process, and also in the other tasks of Phases 1-3 and much of Phase 4 in the Inspiring Place Work Program Stage 1.

My second aim was to make an evaluation of the effectiveness of the community consultation phase, as noted in the previous section. In my role as observer researcher, I saw my involvement with the team in all the other parts of the Work Program, particularly the other stakeholder consultation events, as providing context and information for my assessment of the SDP process. The assessment was also to cover my user survey and agency interviews. The relevant research objectives are:

- undertake a review of selected literature in the field of community participative processes in planning;
- develop criteria from the literature that can be applied to the evaluation of the community consultative processes developed for the SDP;
- collect information for the stakeholder consultation processes other than the survey and the agency interviews;
- apply the criteria to what was actually done in the stakeholder consultation phase; and
- make recommendations for the conduct of community consultative processes in natural area management planning exercises of this kind.

1.5 Thesis Layout

In Chapter Two, research methodology and methods employed are explained. The chapter includes the definition of my roles.

Chapter Three gives the first component of the results from my participant researcher role, and addresses the baseline biophysical and cultural data about Myrtle Forest and its near surroundings. Aspects include natural features, biological values, cultural values, and current uses of the area. Implications for site management are also identified.

Chapter Four presents the findings from the stakeholder consultation tasks for which I was responsible: the user survey and the agency interviews. I also report in this chapter the outcomes of the other stakeholder consultative events: known user group contact, a Collinsvale/Glenlusk Precinct meeting, a Community Walk, and discussions with neighbours. Not all processes were completed as originally planned, as explained in the chapter. I include in this chapter the outcomes of meetings with the Steering Committee and with the study team as well. I did not collect information from these other processes, however, as inputs to the SDP, but for my role as observer researcher as covered in the following chapters described below.

Chapter Five presents the literature review, addressing the broad historical context of planning theories and discussing the current state of knowledge on community consultative planning theory. Features of successful public participation processes are characterised and discussed. Following this, a set of criteria for evaluating the consultative process used for SDP is developed: the major analysis tool to be used in my observer researcher role.

An analysis and discussion of the SDP processes are in Chapter Six. The SDP is evaluated by employing the criteria for success developed in Chapter Five. Some recommendations for improvement are also included in the discussion.

Chapter Seven summarises briefly my overall research program. Following this, lessons about the conduct of the research are identified. My comments on the planning literature are covered, and limitations of my research are given. Lessons from the SDP process are identified and conclude the thesis.

CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

2.1 Methodology

The study is based within the discipline of geography and environmental studies with a focus on participatory natural resource management and its evaluation in a naturalistic social setting, important for field-based research of this kind (Babbie, 2002:280). The SDP setting and its circumstances, as explained earlier, required that I adopt dual roles. In one role where I was part of the study team as researcher collecting and reporting data, both qualitative and quantitative approaches were employed. In my second role, observer researcher, my approach was qualitative because evaluating the efficacy of the SDP stakeholder consultation processes required detailed and in-depth knowledge. Thus, a large part of the SDP process became my case study.

Human geographers often use a qualitative research approach because it permits the researcher to study particular issues, cases, or events in depth and detail (Mason, 1996:3). Using qualitative methods assists the researcher to understand human behaviour and meanings ascribed to their behaviour, and it is important to try to understand those meanings from their own social perspective (Babbie, 2002:284). Moreover, a qualitative approach emphasises in-depth understanding of meaning attached to human action, as data collection is not generally constrained by predetermined categories of analysis (Patton, 1987:9). However, my approach differed to an extent for the evaluation of SDP consultation processes, because I needed to set up criteria for analysis from the literature, as explained below.

In my participant researcher role, collecting and analysing data from a qualitative perspective was also included because the use of some open-ended questions in my survey helped me to understand the meanings that local residents and general ~~sit~~ ^{sp} users attached to Myrtle Forest. Qualitative data alongside quantitative information increased my understanding of the views and aspirations of stakeholders who contributed to my survey.

2.1.1 Ensuring Rigour in Qualitative Research

There are several procedures that ensure validity and reliability in qualitative research. The procedures depend to a great extent on the methodological skill, sensitivity, and training of the researcher (Patton, 1987:8). Babbie (2002:107) also noted that the best research design should utilise more than one research method, as each method has different weaknesses and strengths. The use of several different methods to test the research findings is called triangulation. Like Neuman (2000:124), Bradshaw and Stratford (2000:47) support the concept of triangulation as an appropriate checking procedure.

For me, triangulation in this research was achieved in two ways. The first refers to the mixing of qualitative and quantitative research styles, as proposed by Neuman (2000:125). I employed a quantitative approach in the questionnaire to gain data on the levels of use and aspirations for future development of the site, while open-ended questions allowed me to explore people's ideas at more depth. The Community Walk was another event in the Stakeholder Consultation phase of the process arranged later. The Walk helped me to gain a deeper understanding of aspects identified in the questionnaire even though it was not designed specifically for me to collect data for reporting to Inspiring Place.

7. The second ~~form~~ of triangulation consisted of being part of a process with a supervisor and an Inspiring Place lead consultant and study team in which the first two persons assisted in discussing all aspects of my data collection preparation, and checked the soundness of the procedures for the findings from the survey and

interviews with key informants, as recommended by Bradshaw and Stratford (2000:47). Triangulation also refers in my case to being with the Inspiring Place team when they were in the Steering Committee meetings and other stakeholder events, and interacting with members of the community when I often took advantage of local knowledge. An added element in my role as participant researcher was checking the survey results against discussion with community members, both individually and during stakeholder consultation events like the Community Walk.

2.1.2 Defining My Roles

Before moving onto an explanation of the methods used in the research, it is necessary to position myself more clearly in the study, due to the somewhat complex level of my involvement in producing the SDP. My research was conducted both through participation in the main processes of producing the SDP, and observation/evaluation of the processes. From a qualitative research perspective, the researcher can play a number of roles as both participant and observer in gathering and analysing data. Babbie (2002:284) and Kearns (2000:110) identified four distinctive roles, which basically involve varying degrees of participation and observation. These are: completed participant, participant as observer, observer as participant, and completed observer. Completed participant refers to when the researcher genuinely takes part in or pretends to take part in the event he or she is studying, while in a completed observer role, the researcher on the other hand observes a social process without becoming part of it in any way (Babbie, 2002:284).

My roles in the study could not be defined clearly as one of those suggested because I undertook participation and observation at varying levels, and I thought of my two roles as occurring along a continuum along which the distinction between the two was not always clear. Babbie (2002:285) noted that there are no clear guidelines for making a decision about the definition of roles because different situations ultimately require different inputs from the researcher. Therefore, I decided to modify the categories in order to deal with the complexities of this research.

First, I positioned myself as a “participant researcher” in the process of producing the SDP. As explained earlier in Chapter 1, I was fully involved in the study team and had my own research tasks, namely, to collect the desktop biophysical and cultural facts about Myrtle Forest and its surroundings; the survey in level of use of the site and aspirations that site users and local communities have for future development of the site; and information from the interviews of agencies about their expectations and constraints. By being part of the study team, I also gained invaluable experience of the entire SDP data-gathering phases and a context for my own tasks.

The second role in this research was to evaluate the participatory processes in producing the SDP. Participant observation entails looking, listening, experiencing and recording those components crucial in gathering data (Robinson, 1998:422). Working in the real environment also permits the researcher to observe both verbal and non-verbal behaviour. Reactions of participants in given situations can convey more sophisticated meanings than the ‘written-answers’ from some other techniques, such as a questionnaire (Robinson, 1998:423). As one of the study team members, I was involved in all stakeholder consultation processes and in the Steering Committee meetings listed in the Work Program Stage 1.

I positioned myself as “observer researcher” because it was necessary for me to develop a perspective on all the stakeholder events, and to observe and record the interactions, for example, amongst participants and the study team. I evaluated the efficacy of the SDP process by reference to my experience in participating in all these events, to extensive notes I took, and to a standard data sheet I developed specifically for them at a later stage (see 2.3.3 below). These steps were undertaken within the framework of the criteria I had developed from the participatory planning literature. These criteria were applied as a benchmark assessing how well the public consultation programs were undertaken.

Thus far, I have explained my two roles and the research approaches utilised in this study. I will now describe methods and data collection techniques used in the SDP process in detail.

2.2 Participant Researcher Role: Methods

2.2.1 Ethical Clearance

This research proposal was submitted to the University of Tasmania Human Research Ethics Committee to ensure that the study did not involve any ethical issues associated with questionnaires, key informant interviews, and also other stakeholder consultation processes in which I participated as team member and observed. The Committee reviewed the proposal and confirmed that this project was exempt from full application and gave approval to proceed.

2.2.2 Baseline Data Collection

The first major method of data collection undertaken in the study was a comprehensive review of the literature relating to Myrtle Forest Picnic Area and its surroundings. A completed version of this data was presented to John Hepper, the consultant. Based on review by John Hepper, a second, shorter version was produced. Biophysical and cultural data, and general information on current uses of the site were gathered, and implications for site management were identified. Data from various sources such as books, reports, legislation, management plans, Internet information and personal communications with Collinsvale local residents were used. Information was also provided by the Trust, GCC, and PWS in the form of maps and relevant management plans for the Wellington Park.

Personal communications with local residents became an important part of this data collection because not much specific information on the physical features, cultural values, and current use of Myrtle Forest had been recorded. I obtained important information from conversations with local people. Fieldwork was also undertaken to gain familiarity with the site, and to recheck the accuracy of information obtained from other sources. In producing the baseline data, the relevant literature and information from personal communications were reviewed continually to ensure that the information was as up to date as possible. The short version of the baseline data report is Chapter 3 in the thesis. The longer version is not shown in this thesis, but is

kept at the School of Geography and Environmental Studies in accord with protocols for storing data.

2.2.3 Questionnaire

The second major data collection method employed to achieve the objectives outlined was the survey, using questionnaires. Babbie (2002:240) suggested that a questionnaire is the best way to collect data for describing a population that is too large to observe directly. He also noted that surveys enabled the researcher to measure attitudes in a large population. The questionnaire was developed for site users and local community members to identify the demographic characteristics of the participants, frequency of use, future aspirations for Myrtle Forest Picnic Area, and values given to the area. A questionnaire was chosen as the best way to obtain a large cross-section of views within a limited time frame of approximately two months. Questionnaires provided a means of obtaining information that could be quantitatively analysed from a large sample, though some qualitative data was also requested as noted earlier.

The questionnaire design was important in determining the information to be gathered. Aspects to be included in the questionnaire stemmed largely from communications with local residents, representatives from GCC, PWS, and the Trust, and the consultant; these took place on a number of occasions, such as the Steering Committee meetings (including an on-site meeting), and through informal means such as telephone calls to local people. Peer review of the questionnaire design was carried out by three people: my supervisor, tutor Denbeigh Armstrong who was assigned to give me short-term help, and John Hepper.

The questionnaire procedure included an Information Sheet, which explained the purpose of the study, ensured confidentiality, referred to ethical approval from the University of Tasmania, provided contact details of the researcher, and invited participation in the study. The questionnaire can be found in Appendix B.

The questionnaire sampling method was selective (or purposive) due to the nature of the research topic and aims. In accord with Neuman (2000:198), adopting a purposive sampling method limits responses, in this case, to the users of the Myrtle Forest Picnic Area and the members of local communities. "Local communities" refers to the residents of Collinsvale, Molesworth, and Glenlusk areas. Two ways of collecting data using the questionnaires were applied: on-site and off-site surveys.

2.2.3.1 On-site Survey

I conducted on-site surveys and selected a sample by adopting a convenience-sampling method described by Neuman (2000:196), which means that I spoke to whoever visited the site. Although Newman points out several weaknesses of this sampling method, visitors to Myrtle Forest were my sample. 9p

The survey was conducted from the 23rd November to the 14th December 2003 on four weekends (one Saturday and three Sundays) in total during that period. Weekends proved to be the days that people visited the area the most. I was at the picnic area from 0900 to 1500 each day with a companion. Site users were shown the Information Sheet, and were invited to participate in the study. Participants were asked to fill out the questionnaire on-site, to be collected by the researcher as soon as completed. Visitors who came to the area for the first time were asked to fill in the questionnaire after being at the site for a time, then either to return it as soon as completed or mail it to the University of Tasmania by using the stamped-addressed envelopes provided. Thirty-three questionnaires were completed on-site during the survey period and three were returned by mail.

2.2.3.2 Off-site Survey

Off-site questionnaires using the same form were also applied to gain responses from other local community members not sampled on-site, and known users such as walking club members. For the first target group, copies of the questionnaire were left for collection at the general store in Collinsvale (the only shop). The storekeeper proved to be very helpful in displaying, distributing, and collecting the

questionnaires. Questionnaires were placed at the store on Tuesday the 26th November 2003. The final collection of completed questionnaires was on the 6th January 2004. Collinsvale Primary School also assisted in distributing the questionnaires to 45 families (responsible for 76 students). Questionnaires were distributed with the school weekly newsletter on Wednesday the 26th November and returned to the school by Friday the 5th December. Thirty questionnaires were received from these sources.

Questionnaires were also intended for the members of some walking clubs in Hobart. Ten copies were forwarded to the secretary of the Hobart Walking Club, the best known, to pass them to its members. One questionnaire was sent to another known member of the club. Michael Easton, the Executive Officer of the Trust, also assisted in distributing two questionnaires to two members of another walking club in Hobart. Three questionnaires were returned. Another three were also returned after the data analysis had been completed and are not included in the data below.

One hundred questionnaires were distributed and 33 were returned from the off-site survey. A total of 136 questionnaires were distributed on-site and off-site, and 69 were returned, representing a response rate of 50.73%. Of the 69 respondents, 34 were local residents of Collinsvale, Glenlusk and Molesworth, and 35 were site visitors from elsewhere. More details are provided in the coverage of results in Chapter 4.

2.2.4 Semi-structured Interviews with Key Informants

The third major data collection method involved conducting semi-structured interviews with key informants. The informants were Michael Bidwell from GCC, Michael Easton from the Trust, and Grant Hall from the PWS. These informants were responsible for the SDP process for their own agencies. Each was approached by telephone and asked if they would agree to be interviewed. Initially, the consultants thought that Hobart Water was another agency responsible for the SDP and would also be a Steering Committee member. However, the Myrtle Forest Picnic

Area and catchment is located outside the drinking water reticulation system (Bidwell, M. 2003, pers. comm., 12 Nov.).

Interviews were conducted in person in the agency offices. Prior to conducting a face-to-face interview, I provided a list of questions to be asked, along with the Information Sheet with its brief summary of the study, and a Consent Form. This was to ensure that informants were aware of the topic and methodology and purpose of the study, even though they had already been involved in the SDP process. I asked between five and ten questions in each interview, depending on how freely the interviewees gave information. The main questions are in Appendix C. Each interview took up to 45 minutes, as the semi-structured format allowed the respondents to express their own ideas and opinions. These interviews provided information on agency views, their expectations for future development and the constraints which they saw for the SDP. Interviews were recorded and then transcribed. The information gained was reported to Inspiring Place.

2.2.5 Data Analysis

The community survey was conducted using both quantitative and qualitative styles of question, and two styles of data analysis were adopted. Data gained from quantitative questions were coded and entered into a computer program, and analysed with the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Most of the data were represented by their frequency, while some of the figures were cross-referenced to display both local residents' responses and responses from people outside the local communities. Data obtained from open-ended questions was summarised manually, while some were counted and represented as percentages. Graphs and tables were used to display most of the data.

Data gained from interviews were summarised in question order. Main ideas of the interview transcription were extracted and reported, and these are given in Chapter Four.

2.3 Observer Researcher Role: Methods

With my major aim of evaluating the SDP process for its success as a community participatory exercise, I set out to review relevant literature and develop the necessary tools. The evaluation included my own community survey and the agency interviews, but because they have already been discussed, in 2.2.3 and 2.2.4, in this methods section. I refer to the other stakeholder consultation events with a main focus on the Community Walk. I also count amongst these events the Steering Committee and study team meetings. The last two are not, strictly speaking, pure stakeholder consultative events as the people involved are the managers of the process. However, for me as participant researcher and observer researcher, they gave additional opportunities to contribute and to see how such groups formed their own interactive “communities” which, in turn, related to wider local communities. Further, the Steering Committee meetings were a main means by which local communities entered some of the data gathering and decision-making parts of the process, that is, through the two community representatives.

2.3.1 Literature Review

In this role, I needed to understand the context and practice of participatory planning theories in order to critically analyse the SDP process. I undertook a review of literature on public participatory planning because the SDP process had a main aim to incorporate public inputs in its development. Literature relevant to this context was sourced from books, journals, and the Internet. My supervisors and my tutor assisted me in finding and selecting some of the most useful and relevant literature from a large number of readings. Because I was limited to a one-month period to review this literature, only some publications that proved to be the most applicable were selected. The literature review aimed to present aspects that contributed to good public participatory planning. Before doing so, it was advisable to construct a broader context of planning theory as suggested by one of my professors. However, due to time constraints, I was limited in that respect.

Many aspects of effective public participation were present in the readings. However, I chose those I judged as applicable to and practical for assessing the SDP. These aspects were developed as factors for evaluating the SDP process and then expressed as criteria for efficacy. A set of 14 criteria was developed. The process is presented in Chapter Five.

2.3.2 The Community Walk

I took part in a “Community Walk” in the Myrtle Forest to gain a general understanding of community aspirations for the future development of the site; this involved some similarities with and differences from the focus group method identified by Veal (1992:138), Cameron (2000:84), and Babbie (2002:300). Both focus groups and events like the Community Walk can involve a small group of people discussing defined issues. The participants in the former process sit face to face and discuss a given topic. In contrast, the discussion in the latter process is less structured.

The Community Walk allowed those who participated to have first hand experience of the current state of the site. Group dynamics can bring out discussion topics that could not be generated by other research methods (Babbie 2002:301; Cameron 2000:84). Like focus groups, discussion in a Community Walk process can be comprehensive even though it involved a small number of participants. Bradshaw and Stratford (2000:38) stated that in qualitative research, it is the appropriateness of the sample that is important because ‘the number of people we interview, communities we observe...is less important than the quality of who or what we involve in our research and how we conduct that research’.

The Community Walk in the Myrtle Forest Picnic Area was arranged and organised by Inspiring Place for the 6th January 2004 at 6.30 in the evening. This specific date and time was discussed and finalised by the Collinsvale/Glenlusk Precinct Committee on Tuesday the 9th December 2003. People from the broader area of Collinsvale were also invited to join the Community Walk through the Collinsvale

Primary School newsletter, and information I posted at the Collinsvale store three weeks earlier (17th December 2003). John Hepper, as leader of the Community Walk, facilitated the discussion which lasted for about two hours and took notes on the main ideas covered.

My record of observation for this event needed to be detailed because Neuman (2000:360) suggested that researchers are most interested in explaining what has happened. Therefore, to provide for the details and ensure the consistency of observation, I developed an “Observation Data Sheet” and “Evaluation Data Sheet”. These two data sheets detailed specific points that I needed to address. The former consisted of title, date/time, place activities conducted, names of those present, purpose of the activities, nature of the activities, issues discussed, outcomes, issues resolved, and issues outstanding. The latter included types of observation; comments on how the activities fitted with the whole process; how well the activity advanced the process of producing the SDP; type of facilitation; and participation level of participants and how the participation was recorded. Examples of the two (completed) data sheets are given in Appendix D. The data sheets guided me in observing the phenomena associated with the activities in a consistent way.

I wanted to ensure that non-verbal “language” was also recorded. I used photographs (digital camera), diagrams, and maps as an aid to memory as recommended by Neuman (2002:363). I also ensured that the notes were written in the field or immediately after leaving the field so that important issues were not omitted or forgotten.

2.3.3 Other Consultation

The other steps I participated in and observed are listed below in chronological order. Each also involved John Hepper representing Inspiring Place, and sometimes other study team members.

1. The first meeting with Myrtle Forest Steering Committee on the 22nd July 2003
2. Site visitation with Steering Committee, 11th August 2003
3. Study Team site inspection on the 17th September 2003
4. Meeting with Collinsvale/Glenlusk Precinct Community, 9th December 2003
5. Meeting with Myrtle Forest Steering Committee on the 15th January 2004 to identify key findings from my survey and the Community Walk
6. Meeting with Steering Committee on the 5th March 2004 to comment on the draft SDP

I did not use the data sheets I developed for most of the events listed above because the data sheets were developed fairly late in the process and were focussed on broader community processes. I only had an opportunity to apply my data sheets in the Collinsvale/Glenlusk Precinct meeting and the Community Walk described above. However, I was able to refer to comprehensive notes I took for the other events.

2.4 Conclusions

This chapter has provided an overview of methodology and methods employed in my study. My two roles, namely “participant researcher” and “observer researcher” were differentiated and described, and particular methods associated with each were explained. However, the distinctions between these two roles were not always clear and this made the SDP study a complex process. In Chapter Three and Four I present the results for the participant researcher tasks. My tasks for the observer researcher role are presented in Chapters Five and Six.

CHAPTER 3: SITE VALUES AND USES

The major characteristics of the Myrtle Forest Picnic Area within the Myrtle Forest, with some emphasis on those likely to be relevant to the SDP, are summarised below. Physical features, geological features, biological values (including flora and fauna), cultural values and current uses are described. Many features pertain to both the picnic area and the wider vicinity of Myrtle Forest. The name “Myrtle Forest” is used when reference to the wider area is being made. This name, however, does not appear on any maps. On my Figure 1.2 map on page 3, the name “Myrtle Forest” was inserted.

As stated in the previous chapter, additional data was also collected. Because the level of detail became unnecessary for the SDP, I did not finalise the longer report but it will be kept as stated earlier.

3.1 Physical Features

3.1.1 Climate

There is no climatic data specifically recorded for Myrtle Forest. Estimates of climatic conditions for rainfall, snowfall, temperature, wind velocity, and sunshine rates have been obtained from a monitoring station on Mt Wellington (with adjustment factors applied, as the mountain is 680m higher than Myrtle Forest); from the small amount of available literature; and from conversations with local residents.

Temperatures at Myrtle Forest can fall to minus 5°C during cold winters and rise to 30°C during summer (Bureau of Meteorology, 2003). Snow falls in severe weather and will settle on the ground approximately 2-3 days a year. Snow occurs up to 5-6 times a year (Kowalik, G. 2003, pers. comm., 4 Sep.).

One of the most important climatic features at Myrtle Forest is wind velocity. Wind speed is not high in the sheltered gully of Myrtle Forest, but can be very high on the nearby ridges and upper slopes (Kowalik, G. 2003, pers. comm., 4 Sep.). Wind-generated fallen trees are evident on the ground along the approach road to Myrtle Forest Picnic Area and near the walking track.

3.1.2 Geology and Geomorphology

Myrtle Forest is capped by thick igneous rocks of dolerite, which in general originated at the same time as the rest of the Wellington Range. A dominant feature of dolerite is its great strength, which typically provides greater resistance to surface erosion than many kinds of rocks present on the Range (WPMT, 1996:21). However, dolerite rocks in Myrtle Forest are covered by soil types that are easily eroded. Loveday (1955) noted that soils in the Myrtle Forest are yellow-brown on solifluction deposits. It is also reported in WPMT (1996:37) that soils in the Myrtle Forest are dolerite on bedrock or slope deposits composed of clay loams over yellow-brown to reddish stony clay or clay loam. In the same report, it is estimated that the potential for landslip, where there are susceptible materials, is moderate on 15°-20° slopes in Myrtle Forest and high on slopes steeper than 20°.

Geomorphological features of conservation value in Myrtle Forest are noted in the report "Draft Wellington Park Values, Use and Management: Inventory of Public Comment" (WPMT, 1996:31). Myrtle Forest Falls, not far upstream from the picnic area, is a geomorphological feature of conservation value in Wellington Park, of representative significance at a local level. This feature is listed in the report (WPMT, 1996:31) as being vulnerable to degradation. Potential threats are described as 'excavation, landslips, upstream soil erosion and siltation'.

A major potential cause of erosion problems at Myrtle Forest is fluvial activity. Based on my observations, soil erosion at Myrtle Forest results primarily from running water in the main creek and on the sideslopes. As stated in WPMT (1996:48), there is the potential that Myrtle Forest will be associated with sheet, rill

and gully erosion if drainage problems are inadequately managed. The current walking track is on steep slopes and vulnerable to landslip (WPMT, 1996:35). “The Wellington Park Walking Track Strategy” also recommended Myrtle Forest Walking Track improvements as a ‘very high’ priority due to surface conditions (WPMT, 2003: Appendix F: 5).

Management of the walking tracks through Myrtle Forest requires provision of an appropriate drainage system. As cited in WPMT (2003: Appendix F: 5), there are two significant drainage problems on the Myrtle Forest-Collins Bonnet walking track. Two inflows come from smallish funnels through the bank. The first inflow is approximately one and a half metres away from the wooden bridge at the very beginning of the track entrance. The second inflow is about five minutes walking distance from the track entrance, where the track runs next to the creek. However, I have noted that there is also an additional inflow approximately three metres before the point where the small track goes down to the base of the Myrtle Forest Falls. This inflow floods the walking track for about 100m, causing wet and muddy track surfaces.

3.2 Biological Values

3.2.1 Flora

Myrtle Forest is occupied by combinations of rainforest and wet gully species, with the presence of Eucalypts. The area remains permanently wet all year. Myrtle Forest is one of only a few places with rainforest and mixed wet gully vegetation that survived the catastrophic wildfire in 1967 that devastated large areas of southern Tasmania (Kirkpatrick, J.B. 2003, pers. comm., 4 Nov.). All the plant communities have regenerated. The debris of vegetation burnt in 1967 is still evident. There are still the remains of rotten tree trunks that have become the base for a rich variety of mosses and lichens. The gully rainforest trees I saw in Myrtle Forest include myrtle (*Nothofagus cunninghamii*), and sassafras (*Atherosperma moschatum*). The dominant broadleaf shrubs include blanket leaf (*Bedfordia salicina*), musk (*Olearia*

argophylla), silver wattle (*Acacia dealbata*), and dogwood (*Pomaderris apetala*). The dominant Eucalypts found are swamp gum (*Eucalyptus regnans*). Manferns (*Dicksonia antarctica*) are also present. The gully and mixed wet species are also noted by Ratkowsky and Ratkowsky (1976), Johnson (1994), Kirkpatrick and McDonald (1996), and WPMT (2000:29).

These species have high fire sensitivity. However, compared to the true rainforest species that can be easily killed by fire, gully and mixed wet communities with species such as myrtle and sassafras are more fire tolerant. They could manage to survive if burnt as the reproduction process and seed dispersal systems of those species are more efficient (Cullen, 1991:30).

Belonging to family Cyperaceae, the small curly sedge (*Carex tasmanica*) is also present near the picnic shelter. This species is significant at the Commonwealth level as it is listed under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* as vulnerable. Curly sedge is facing a high risk of extinction nationally, as it only occurs in Tasmania and Victoria. In Victoria, *Carex tasmanica* was found at only nine sites and none of those sites is in conservation reserves (Morcom, 1999). This plant is vulnerable to destruction mostly because its habitat is modified, such as for cropping, grazing, cultivation and residential development. In Tasmania, this plant is recorded on private lands. Myrtle Forest is the only reserve where *Carax tasmanica* is present (Kirkpatrick, J.B. 2003, pers. comm., 4 Nov.).

Weeds are also present in the Myrtle Forest Picnic Area. Elisha's Tears (*Leycesteria formosa*) occurs especially along the road next to the Myrtle Forest Creek. The seeds of Elisha's Tears are readily dispersed by birds and germinate easily in damp gullies or moist areas. Elisha's Tears germinate more easily in open forest than in dense forest (Kirkpatrick, J.B. 2003, pers. comm., 4 Nov.).

3.2.2 Fauna

Myrtle Forest is home to a diverse species of fauna. Formal records of animal sightings in Myrtle Forest are kept by the PWS. Many common animals have also been noted by site users. A Myrtle Forest Picnic Site Species List (Bryant, 2003) (see Appendix E) includes various kinds of animals including birds, mammals, reptiles, frogs, and others. Mammals are Ringtail and Brushtail possums, potoroos or kangaroo-rats, Common wombats, Bennett's wallaby, pademelon, and echidnas. Platypuses have been sighted in the Myrtle Forest Creek. The three kinds of Tasmanian snakes, Blue tongue lizard, Metallic skink, Ocellated skink, Southern toadlet, Brown froglet, Common froglet, Tasmanian froglet, Brown trout, and Galaxiid species are also common. The *Anaspides tasmaniae*, an endemic fresh water shrimp belonging to a primitive group of crustaceans called Syncarid, was also sighted in Myrtle Forest Creek when Hay (1977) conducted his study on the invertebrate fauna of Mt Wellington streams.

Birds are also regularly seen. Most of them are ubiquitous, except for the Pink Robin and endemic Scrubtit which are found mostly in gullies and wet sclerophyll, and not in other zones (Ratkowsky, 1983a). The scrubtit is of local significance as it is an endemic Tasmanian species. Mt Wellington is the most accessible site where scrubtit can be easily seen. Mt Field is the next closest site (WPMT, 1996). Concern on this species' status was expressed in WPMT (1996:86) due to the relative scarcity of habitat on the Wellington Range, and the fire sensitive nature of these areas. Other bird species endemic to Tasmania include Green Rosella, Tasmanian Scrubwren, Tasmanian Thornbill, Yellow-throated Honeyeater, Strong-billed Honeyeater, Black-headed Honeyeater, and Black Currawong. Listed as threatened in Tasmania, the Grey Goshawk and Wedge-tailed Eagle are also sighted at Myrtle Forest. The Grey Goshawk is classified as vulnerable due to a small population and limited habitat area. The Wedge-tailed Eagle is vulnerable due to its small numbers and the disturbance of nesting habitat by human activities.

3.3 Cultural values

3.3.1 Aboriginal Heritage

An Aboriginal Site Register (TASI) is managed by the Aboriginal Heritage Unit of the Department of Tourism, Parks, Heritage and the Arts (Hall, G. 2004, pers. comm., 5 Jan). It appears that most known Aboriginal sites are concentrated at the edges of the Derwent estuary and a few sites inland. Very few systematic surveys have been undertaken around the Hobart area and none within the Park boundaries (WPMT, 1996:104). As cited in WPMT (1996:105), known sites not too far removed from Myrtle Forest include stone artefacts on the track near the New Town Rivulet, and on another track near Lenah Valley Road. Some other Aboriginal sites recorded are on the summit of Goat Hill, which lies within the Glenorchy City boundary to the northeast of Myrtle Forest Picnic Area and in the Knocklofty area. No Aboriginal sites are known in Myrtle Forest.

3.3.2 History of Use of the Site

The history of use of Myrtle Forest since European settlement in Tasmania has been well documented. The available texts are by Alexander (1986) and Appeldorff (1986). Both illustrated the history of Collinsvale (which had its name changed from Bismarck in 1915 [Appeldorff, 1986:15]) and the early European settlement in the vicinity of Myrtle Forest.

Collinsvale was first settled in the 1870s. The early settlers were mostly from England, Germany, and Denmark (Alexander and Young, 1998:321). Timber was plentiful in Collinsvale, providing settlers with material to construct their homes and farms. A sawmill was operated for the first time in the early 1900s (Appeldorff, 1986:46). Harvesting timber was dangerous and required skills as the tools were limited to axes, saws and wedges. Timber getting has also occurred in Myrtle Forest. Evidence of logging activities can be found in the area; a big tree stump with steps cut by the faller is present in the picnic area (Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1: A big tree stump with steps in the picnic area



The use of Myrtle Forest for recreation purposes was recorded by both Alexander (1986) and Appeldorff (1986). There is more discussion on the use of the area for recreational activities below. Aesthetic values and community values are also discussed below in the context of current use, and there is reference to historical details as well.

3.3.3 Aesthetic Values

There is likely to be significant aesthetic value associated with the Myrtle Forest Picnic Area due to its landform, rainforest and mixed wet gully vegetation. A gully landform with mountain streams and waterfalls makes the site highly interesting. Its special natural features, ease of accessibility and peace and tranquillity, are

distinctive. Myrtle Forest has been well known for a long time as a beautiful place. Appeldorf (1986:7) wrote of 1920 in the *Memories of Collinsvale* as follows:

The Myrtle and sassafras trees used to be so thick and high that when you walked along the track you could not see the sky, and it was so beautiful you almost spoke in whispers.

The beauty of Myrtle Forest as a tourist destination was recognised in the early days of European settlement. Postcards (assumed to have been printed before 1890), depicted the beauty of the rainforest community of Myrtle Forest (Alexander, 1986:83)

The aesthetic value of the area contributes to its social value to local residents. This also leads to public sensitivity about development.

3.3.4 Community Values

The social and community value of Myrtle Forest is underscored by its being a focus of group socializing and recreation. Myrtle Forest is significant to the local community's sense of place. Local residents and visitors have used it regularly for their outdoor activities. An example is drawn from *Memories of Collinsvale* by Appeldorff (1986), whose grandparents were the very first European settlers of Collinsvale. She has depicted her childhood memories of weekend picnicking in Myrtle Forest as follows (p.40):

Our guests used to love a trip to Myrtle Forest and I loved to go with them. After all, this was my forest, and I felt like a part owner, and enjoyed showing it off. If we had people staying overnight, we would go to the Forest on Saturday afternoon, then come home to a meal Mother had ready.

The values that the Collinsvale community have attributed to the Myrtle Forest have also been expressed through their work in upgrading the picnic area. The Collinsvale/Glenlusk Precinct Committee (the Precinct Committee) is a special committee, which was set up through Glenorchy City Council community processes under the *Local Government Act 1993*. The Precinct Committee and Collinsvale

communities have placed a high priority on improving the standard of the Myrtle Forest Picnic Area to be a main recreational place for local residents and a visitor destination.

The Precinct Committee had a comprehensive discussion on the poor condition of the Myrtle Forest Picnic Area in 1998 (Kowalik, G. 2003, pers. comm., 6 Nov.). Many concerns were raised about car parking, rubbish bins, road signage, interpretation signage, pathways, a toilet block, disabled access, and barbecue facilities. When the GCC conducted a community survey in 1999, the Precinct Committee expressed the idea that Myrtle Forest could be improved to be a tourist destination. They also proposed that the old picnic shelter should be upgraded. The proposal went to the Wellington Park Management Advisory Committee, and after approval, the shelter was rebuilt in 2000.

A toilet block and observation platform on the walking track were the next proposals. However, after the picnic shelter was rebuilt, the Collinsvale community discussed identifying the real needs for the area, and the Precinct Committee decided that there should be a SDP for the Myrtle Forest Picnic Area. Again, the idea for an SDP was proposed to the Wellington Park Management Advisory Committee. The Committee then made a recommendation to the Wellington Park Management Trust. The SDP project was finally approved. Precinct Committee representatives became part of the Steering Committee to further the SDP.

3.4 Current Use

3.4.1 Recreation and Tourism

Given the natural beauty of the place, a photo of Myrtle Forest appeared on the previously-mentioned postcards (Alexander, 1986:83). The time of printing was not recorded, but there is evidence that Collinsvale was put on the tourist program as “one of the finest mountain drives in Tasmania” by the 1890s (Alexander, 1980:84).

Currently, Myrtle Forest is used by local people and visitors. Site use is higher on weekends and during summer (Kowalik, G. 2003, pers. comm., 6 Nov.). Activities include picnicking, socializing, nature observation, and bushwalking. Members of the Hobart Walking Club and others use the site as a starting point for longer walks.

3.4.2 Science and Education

Myrtle Forest has played a vital role in scientific studies for a number of scientists, including naturalists and meteorologists, such as Ratkowsky (1983a, 1983b), Ratkowsky and Ratkowsky (1976, 1977a, 1977b, 1978, 1982), Kirkpatrick and Dickinson (1984), Kirkpatrick and McDonald (1996), Davies (1988), and Loveday (1955). Their studies provided important baseline data for this SDP study, but they are also essential to future academic research. As discussed earlier, the local natural features are significant in many ways, and Myrtle Forest is one of the small rainforest patches that occur on the Wellington Range. A participant on a Myrtle Forest Community Walk, arranged as part of the SDP consultation process, was also to point out that the area supported possibly the only remaining stand of old growth *Eucalyptus regnans* in the Wellington Park.

There is no specially developed nature trail within Myrtle Forest. However, the existing walking tracks offers access to a range of natural and cultural features and historical sites for both formal and informal study and outdoor education. The PWS once established a panel illustrating the history of Myrtle Forest since European settlement, and its natural and cultural features, but the panel was stolen in 2000.

interpretive

Myrtle Forest is considered to be complementary to the role of the Molesworth Environment Centre (WPMT, 1996:175), indicating the local community support for nature studies for children. Luttrell (2003, pers. comm., 19 Nov.) stated that for about 10 years, the Molesworth Environment Centre have arranged a program for students to go for a one-day walk at Myrtle Forest once a month. Students walk to Collins Cap and identify the natural features of the area, for example.

3.4.3 Water Catchments

The Wellington Range plays a major role in the water supply system for Hobart and adjacent areas. Mt Wellington storages are the most important as they supply the cities of Hobart and Glenorchy (WPMT, 1996:212). Hobart mountain storages and the Glenorchy mountain storage are two major storages that have an average yield of 6,000 and 2,600 megalitres per annum, respectively. Nearby Sorell Creek, fed by Myrtle Forest Creek and other tributaries, is not included in the system. However, with its catchment capacity of 78km², Sorell Creek provides a significant supply of water for local communities outside the reticulated system. Sorell Creek passes through Collinsvale and Molesworth to reach the Derwent River. Individual landowners in Collinsvale and Molesworth draw water from Sorell Creek for daily use and irrigation purposes (WPMT, 1996:214).

3.5 Implications for Site Management

3.5.1 Major Risks: General

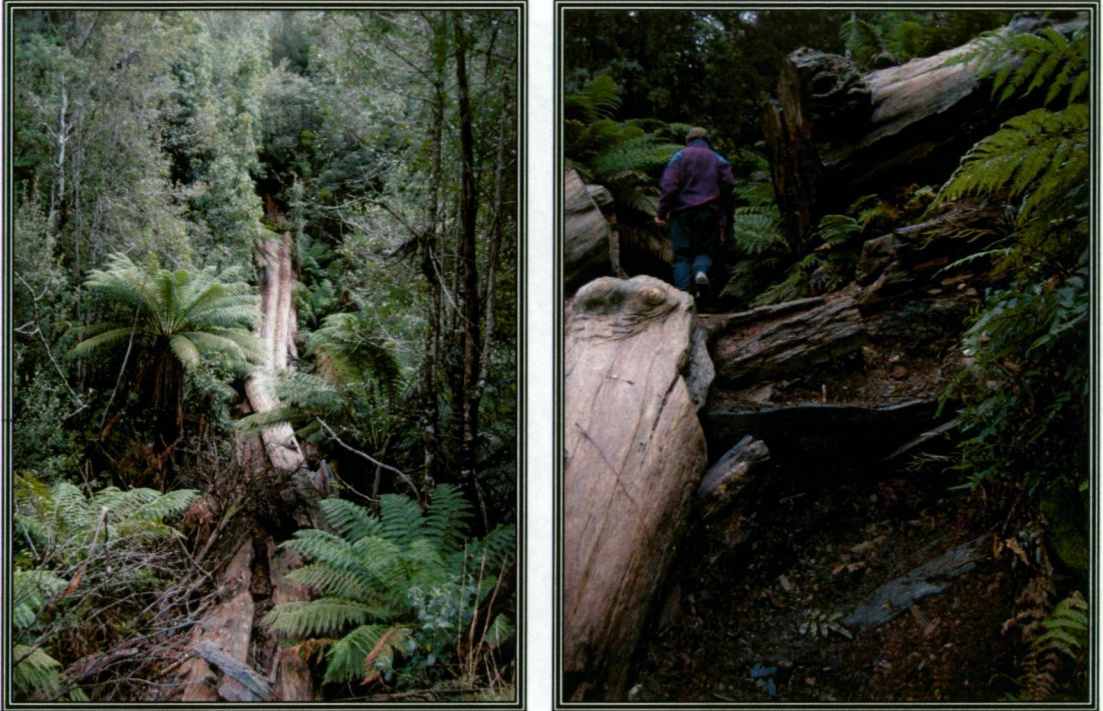
Risks stem from the climatic, geological and geomorphological conditions of Myrtle Forest. These risks include tree falls, erosion, and flooding. Falling debris from trees may affect the safety of site users due to high wind velocity as shown in Figure 3.2. Erosion of the walking tracks due to deficient drainage can also affect the security of site users. There is also the risk from flooding during times of high rainfall, as some sections of the walking track are located next to the creek. Some parts of the track are susceptible to water running through small funnels down to the creek from sideslopes, and the path can be wet and slippery.

3.5.2 Hazards Associated with Geology and Soils

Hazards associated with geology and soils are present at Myrtle Forest as discussed earlier. Soils are susceptible to erosion. There is the possibility of landslip if there are susceptible materials on a slope. As also indicated earlier, Myrtle Forest Falls are

vulnerable to potential threats of excavation, landslips, upstream soil erosion and siltation. Bank erosion could occur by fluvial activities and poor track management.

Figure 3.2: Wind-generated Hazards at Myrtle Forest



The drainage system is one of the causes of soil and bank erosion at Myrtle Forest. As discussed previously, there are three significant inflows through funnels from the bank. The current walking track is partly flooded by those inflows, causing wet and muddy surface conditions. Recommendations were made by WPMT (2003: Appendix F) to install additional cross drains on the track in order to fix the problem.

3.5.3 Significance of Values

3.5.3.1 Natural Values

About one third of the total area of rainforest in Australia is in Tasmania (Cullen, 1991:24). Tasmanian rainforests are different from those in Victoria in that they include a large number of endemic species. Most of the pure rainforest communities are on the West Coast of the State and in the northeast highlands. They also can be found, however, in small patches in the eastern half of Tasmania (Cullen, 1991:24).

Although the plant communities at Myrtle Forest are not pure rainforest, a large number of rainforest species, endemic species and wet gully communities are present. Thus, plant communities of Myrtle Forest can be considered to have conservation value.

Rainforest remnants are highly sensitive to fire, and many of the rainforest elements in the park have been eliminated, but Myrtle Forest is one of the very few survivors from 1967 (Kirkpatrick, J.B. 2003, pers. comm., 4 Nov.). Although Myrtle Forest has never been burnt since 1967, a significant requirement noted in the “Fire Management Strategy for Wellington Park” is to exclude all fires from these plant communities (WPMT, 2000:33).

Many species of animals are present as indicated earlier. Gully plant communities are associated with increases in abundance of bird species (Ratkowsky, 1983b). Some birds such as the Pink Robin and the endemic Scrubtit can only be found in gullies and wet sclerophyll, and not in other zones (Ratkowsky, 1983a). Threatened species sighted at Myrtle Forest are the Grey Goshawk and the Wedge-tailed Eagle. Both are vulnerable due to their small population size, restricted habitats and disturbance of nesting sites. They are of local conservation significance.

Myrtle Forest Creek and falls also offer a beautiful natural environment. Myrtle Forest Falls is a geomorphological feature of conservation value in Wellington Park, of representative significance at a local level. This feature is listed by WPMT (1996:31) as being vulnerable to degradation as mentioned earlier. Given all its natural features, Myrtle Forest is one of the accessible places where visitors can experience a rainforest gully, mountain streams, scenic views, and waterfalls close to Hobart.

The ecosystems of Myrtle Forest have value for their roles in maintaining the life of natural species and communities. Scientific significance can be assigned to various

flora and fauna groups for their genetic and scientific values. They also have value for their roles in contributing to the quality of recreational and tourist experiences.

Clearly, Myrtle Forest possesses significant natural values that need protection. However, there are a few issues that could result in harm to the natural values of the place: risks that originate from wildfire, weeds, and plant removal. Fire sensitive species of rainforest could be eliminated if burnt frequently. Mature trees could also be killed and old growth elements could be removed if exposed to high intensity fires (WPMT, 2000:33).

Elisha's Tears occurs at Myrtle Forest. To eliminate this weed, appropriate control and follow up work is required. Human activities can also be hazardous to natural values of Myrtle Forest. Glen Kowalik, a local resident, stated that some kinds of plants, especially ferns, have been removed from the area by some site users (Kowalik, G. 2003, pers. comm., 11 Aug.).

3.5.3.2 Cultural Values

The cultural values of Myrtle Forest are underscored by its history of use, its historical functions, and the interest of the local community. Historically, Myrtle Forest has been a provider to each generation of clean water, timber, recreation and tourism, and has been a significant place in their lives. Cultural values that local communities associate with Myrtle Forest are indicated by their initiatives in fostering a site development proposal, the willingness to volunteer assistance, and aspirations for future development of the site.

3.5.3.3 Use Values

Current uses of Myrtle Forest include conservation, recreation and tourism, science and education, and water catchment services. As Myrtle Forest is in the Recreation Zone in the Park, it is significant in providing users with the opportunity to appreciate the area and to enjoy recreation activities in a natural setting. As the track is frequently used by Hobart Walking Club members, they offered in 1987 their

voluntary assistance to repair the track, and local communities of Collinsvale have given in-principle support to assist in improving the site to be a tourist destination (Kowalik, G. 2003, pers. comm., 6 Nov.)

Myrtle Forest is as an important site that supports scientific studies and education on natural features. The natural features and history of the site are vital for outdoor education.

The Sorell Creek and its tributaries (including Myrtle Forest Creek) are not part of the main system for drinking water, but any future plans for the site will need to address problems that might affect water quality, since local residents use the water.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter provides an overview of major characteristics of the Myrtle Forest Picnic Area. The chapter also discusses implications for site management that may be relevant to the SDP. This baseline study was given to Inspiring Place as data that could be used to develop the SDP, but compiling the data also meant that I was learning more about the SDP context and starting to interact with community members who knew much about Myrtle Forest.

CHAPTER 4: CONSULTATION PROGRAM - RESULTS

My role as participant researcher is continued in this chapter, which reports the results of my stakeholder consultation responsibilities for the community survey and the key agency interviews. I also include my descriptions of the other stakeholder consultation events which belong more to my observer researcher role. In addition, however, it makes sense to describe the Steering Committee and study team meetings first to give readers an overview of the way the SDP phases unfolded.

4.1 Steering Committee/ Study Team Meetings

4.1.1 Steering Committee

There were three study team meetings with the Myrtle Forest SDP Steering Committee, before a fourth for discussion of the draft SDP. I attended all four. With its representatives from the Trust, PWS, GCC, and the Collinsvale/Glenlusk Precinct Committee, the first was on the 22nd July 2003 to introduce the study team - including John Hepper and me as the researcher from the University of Tasmania - to the project. Carl Turk who would prepare the on-ground plans for the SDP was also present. The outcomes of the meeting were that Michael Bidwell from GCC was to provide mapping and other relevant information to me to commence work on baseline data. John Hepper was asked to develop a work program for the project, to be presented on the 11th August 2003 when the next meeting was arranged to be on-site at Myrtle Forest.

The Myrtle Forest meeting addressed background information about the site, and discussed and identified issues that needed to be covered in the study. Concerns included facilities improvement such as the picnic shelter, the lack of car parking

spaces, anti-social behaviour, the lack of signage, the need for walking track improvement, the preservation of threatened species, the need for a short walking circuit, access for people with mobility difficulty, and possibilities to make the area a tourist destination. Additional personnel from Inspiring Place also attended.

The third meeting was arranged at the GCC on the 15th January 2004. This aimed to report the work that had been done by the study team to the Steering Committee. This included my summary of findings from the questionnaire, and site planning issues and site planning ideas from John Hepper.

The meeting to comment on the draft plan prepared by Inspiring Place was on the 5th March 2004. Five members of the Steering Committee were present. They had been forwarded copies of the plan. One member said that the draft did not satisfy all the requirements of the Project Brief; in particular, the draft plan failed to address the development capacity of the site, boundary of the site, and indicative costs. Topics mostly discussed were the carrying capacity of the site, problems that may develop from Option A, the most favoured option of these presented in the draft, the lack of provision for barbecue facilities, and the matter of costs. The SDP outcomes are a matter I discuss further in Chapter Six. The next stages, a public comment period and processes after the comments, were also discussed. The meeting concluded that the consultant was to revise the draft plan after the public display.

4.1.2 Team Site Familiarisation

The study team visited Myrtle Forest on the 17th September 2003. On this visit, the team aimed to gain familiarisation with Myrtle Forest and to examine the potential for developing a short loop walk. The team also sought to inspect the quality of existing facilities along with problems occurring on the site. In order to find an appropriate and feasible route for a short circuit walk, the study team divided up into two groups and walked on different routes that were thought to be practical.

The results gained from discussion included the need for weed control; possible modification of the lower car park to use as a small-scale picnic site with limited car parking spaces and interpretation board; use of the upper car park for the main parking spaces; establishment of a car park boundary to protect site users and the Creek; use of the entry to a fire trail and a corner of the upper car park as a turning point; and the redesign of the uninviting picnic shelter. The walking track to Collins Cap and Collins Bonnet was generally in good condition but some concerns were the drainage system which caused track erosion. It was also decided that any development of a short walking loop at Myrtle Forest was impractical, because of the very difficult terrain and, consequently, the probability of very high costs and environmental damage. An alternative to a short walking track was to improve the early part of the existing walking track to be a short walk instead of developing another one. This early section of the walking track was from the wooden bridge at the beginning of the track up to the waterfall.

4.2 The Community Survey

Before the details are given, a short summary at the beginning of the questionnaire and key informant sections respectively indicates the most important results. After the survey summary, data are divided into subtopics and explained in the same order as the questions (see Appendix B for a copy of the questionnaire).

4.2.1 Key Findings: Questionnaires

The immediate neighbours visited Myrtle Forest much more often than any other groups of respondents². Most popular activities undertaken on the site by both the locals and outsiders were appreciating nature and short walks. Visitors also said that they would like to be able to barbecue at the site. The condition of the existing facilities at Myrtle Forest was rated as of 'fair' quality. Facilities that should be improved or added were toilets, barbecue facilities, and site information. Vandalism

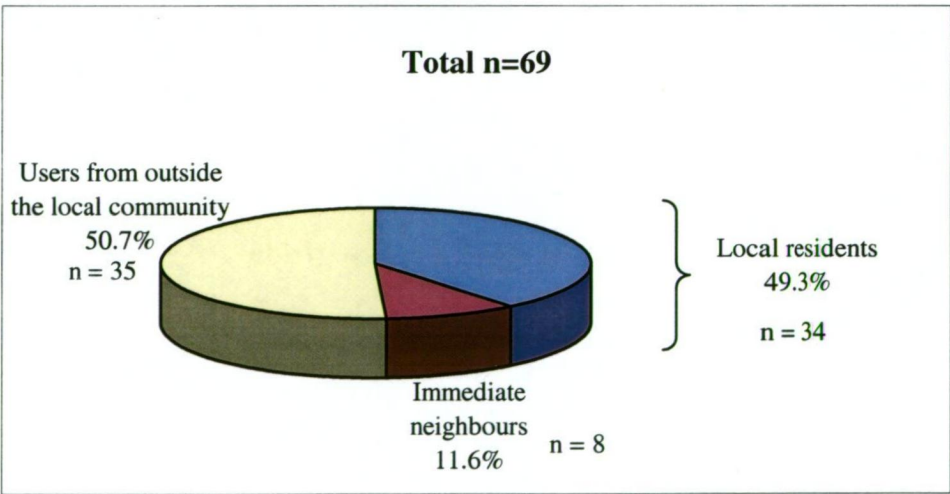
² Immediate neighbours are defined in section 4.2.2 below.

was indicated to be the worst problem at the site. Respondents suggested that this concern should be taken into account in the development of the SDP.

4.2.2 Questionnaire Results

A response rate of 50.73% was achieved from the 136 questionnaires distributed (69 out of 136). Data from questionnaire responses reveal that there were two major groups of respondents in the study: the residents of the local community, which is taken to include Collinsvale, Glenlusk and Molesworth, and people from other locations. The sample sizes from Glenlusk (7) and Molesworth (2) were not considered large enough to justify dividing them into separate groups. Therefore, the results presented as those of “local residents” mostly represent the Collinsvale responses. The 34 of 69 respondents from the local community represents 49.3% of returns, and the 35 from elsewhere represents a response rate of 50.7%, as shown in Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1: Proportion of questionnaire responses by different user groups



Another group of respondents that is sub-categorised within the local communities was the immediate neighbours, representing 11.6% of all respondents. The immediate neighbours are defined as the people who reside on the Myrtle Forest Road which leads to the Myrtle Forest Picnic Area.

4.2.2.1 User Group Characteristics

The major group of site users were between 41-50 years (Table 4.1). Others were spread evenly across the age groups, except for those who were between 16-20 and more than 65 years.

Table 4.1: Age groups of questionnaire respondents

	16-20 years old	21-30 years old	31-40 years old	41-50 years old	51-65 years old	65+ years old
Site users (n=69)	1%	23.20%	18.80%	31.90%	21.70%	1.40%

The respondents can be divided by gender evenly as shown in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Gender of questionnaire participants

	Male	Female
Site users (n=69)	50.70%	47.80%

4.2.2.2 Patterns of Use of the Site

The data revealed that about 40% of people have visited Myrtle Forest only within the last 12 months, but 45% said that they have been using the site for more than five years (Figure 4.2). However, the majority of the former were from other locations, and 24 out of 25 of these mentioned that it was their first visit. The majority of local residents answered that they have visited the site for more than five years (70%), while only one fifth from other locations have visited the area for more than five years.

The frequency of visits to the Myrtle Forest Picnic Area varied from once to daily. The local respondents use the area far more frequently than the users from other locations. Assuming that 'every day' literally equals 365 visitations, and '3 times a week' equals 156 visitations, 34 local participants account for approximately 2043 visits, and 35 participants from elsewhere account for about 91 visits a year. This

means the 69 people account for approximately 2134 visits to the Myrtle Forest Picnic Area per annum. However, immediate neighbours appeared to visit the site more frequently than anyone else as shown in Figure 4.3. Of course, it needs to be remembered that outsiders who responded were only those who actually went to the picnic area during the short on-site survey on one Saturday and three Sundays between 23rd November and 14th December 2003.

Figure 4.2: Number of years of visiting Myrtle Forest

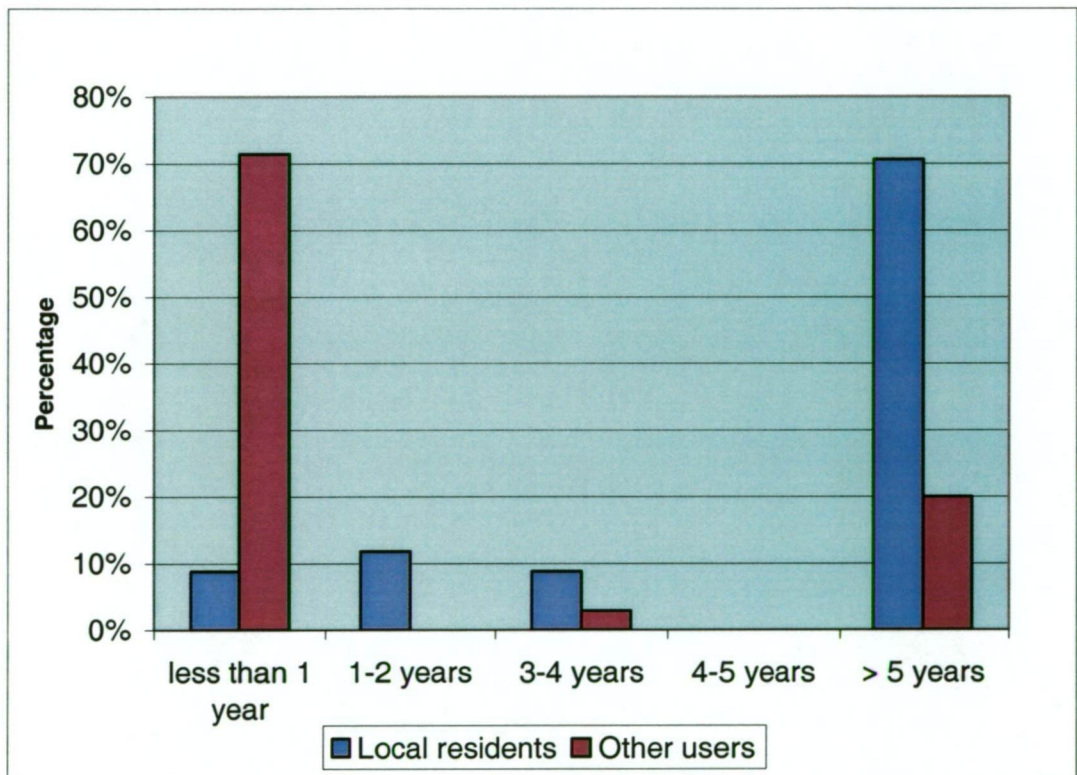


Table 4.3 shows that a majority of local residents visited the area in every season. More than 50% of participants from other locations wrote that they visited the site in spring (62.9%) and summer (51.4%), many less visited during autumn and winter. However, these results may merely reflect the fact that the on-site survey took place in late spring/early summer and that most outsiders were on their first trip to Myrtle Forest.

Figure 4.3: Frequency of visits to Myrtle Forest Picnic Area extrapolated to per annum visitation

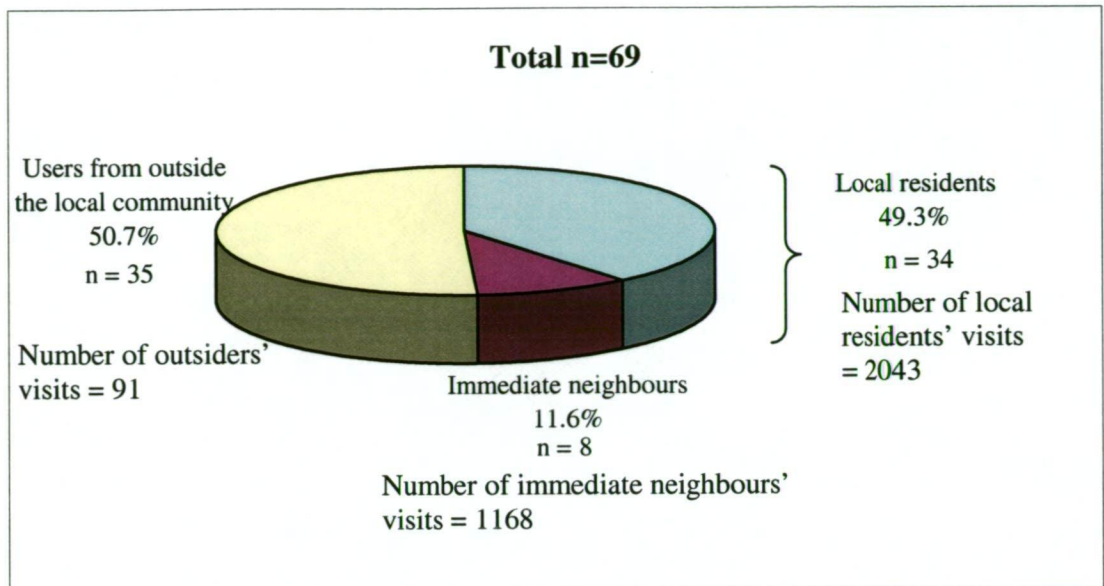


Table 4.3: Visitation seasons

	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter
Local residents	79.40%	79.40%	85.30%	73.50%
Other users	62.90%	51.40%	14.30%	17.10%

Asked about the length of time they normally spend at the site, half the participants were there about one-two hours, while approximately one fifth spent three-four hours (Table 4.4). Local residents tend to spend only one-two hours at most, but more frequently, while the time spent by visitors from other suburbs varied from one-two hours to all day. This is because the latter undertook more time consuming activities, such as walking to Collins Cap and Collins Bonnet.

Table 4.4: Length of time at the site

	1-2 hours	3-4 hours	half a day	all day
Local residents	73.50%	11.80%	8.80%	2.90%
Other Users	31.40%	31.40%	14.30%	14.30%
Proportions of all visitors	52.20%	21.70%	11.60%	8.70%

The majority (55.1%) of the participants visited with their family, while a quarter came with friends (Table 4.5). However, a high proportion of locals visit with family (64.7%), and a fifth with friends. The percentages from other suburbs who went to the site with their family and who visit the site with friends were not very different (45.7% and 31.4% respectively). Many neighbouring residents visit with their dogs. From my observations, there were eight out of 27 visits with dogs within the four-day-on-site-survey period.

Table 4.5: Companions who visit Myrtle Forest with respondents

Percentage	No response	Family	Friends	Other
Local residents	2.90%	64.70%	20.60%	11.80%
Respondents from other locations	8.60%	45.70%	31.40%	14.30%
Proportion of all visitors	5.80%	55.10%	26.10%	13.00%

Generally, three quarters of the participants travelled by car and about 22 % walked (Table 4.6). All of the outsiders travelled by car, as did most of the local residents (60%). A significant number of the latter walked as they resided nearby. Only one respondent travelled by horse.

Table 4.6: Means of travelling to Myrtle Forest

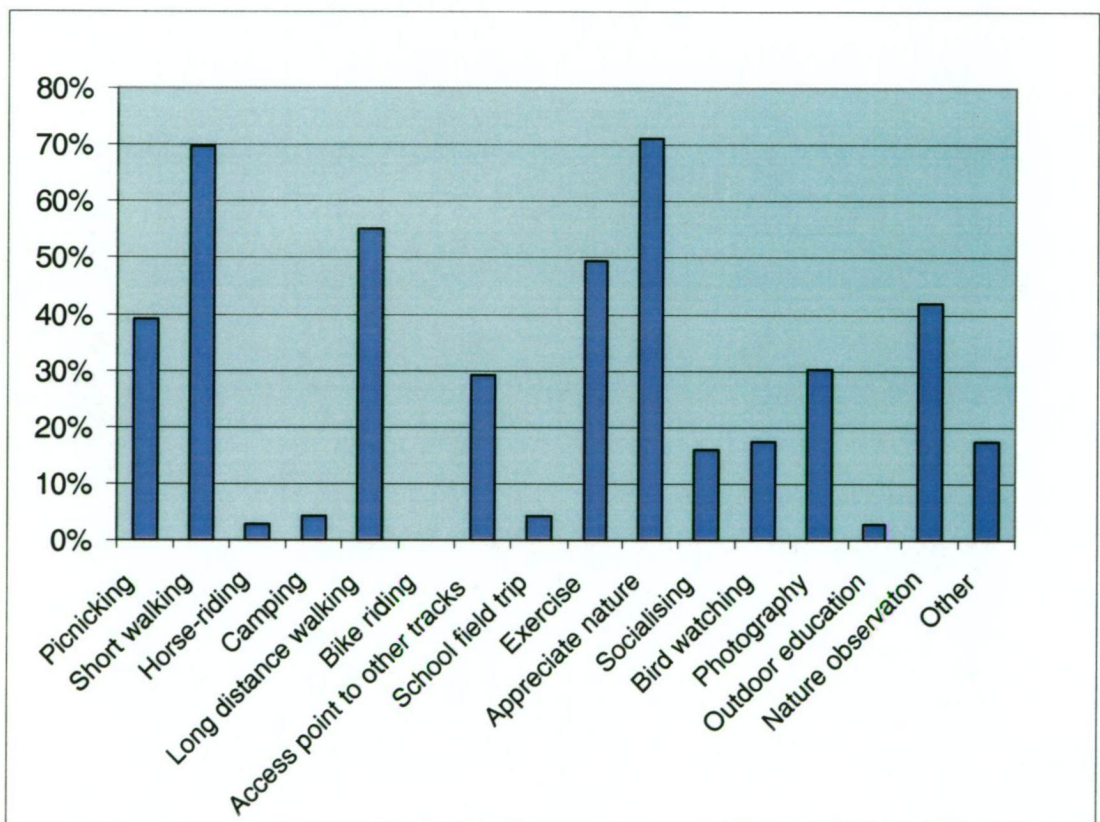
	Car	Walk	Horse
Local residents	58.80%	38.20%	2.90%
Other users	91.40%	5.70%	-
Proportion of all visitors	75.40%	21.70%	1.40%

4.2.2.3 Activities Undertaken

Overall, short walks and appreciating nature were the two major on-site activities (Figure 4.4). The next most popular were long distance walking to Collins Cap and Collins Bonnet, undertaken by about half of all participants. Exercising was mentioned by almost half the respondents. Nature observation and picnicking were

important for 42% and 39.1% respectively. About 30% of the respondents mentioned that they liked photography and used the site as an entry point to other parts of the Wellington Park. About 17% of the respondents were attracted to bird watching, and 15% specifically included socialising as part of their visit. Under the category of other activities, about 17% indicated pursuits including joining a working bee to collect rubbish, eradicate weeds, check the site for vandalism, walk dogs, and fire brigade-related activities.

Figure 4.4: The activities undertaken by all site users



Horse riding, camping (4.3%), bike riding (0%), school field trips (4.3%) and outdoor education (2.9%) were insignificant. Horse riding and camping are not permitted on the site, which is part of the Wellington Park. School field trips and outdoor education were insignificant because, although it is known that Molesworth Primary School undertakes an outdoor education program in Myrtle Forest, the on-site survey was conducted during weekends. Some people who ticked these activities were probably indicating that children in the family went to Myrtle Forest as part of

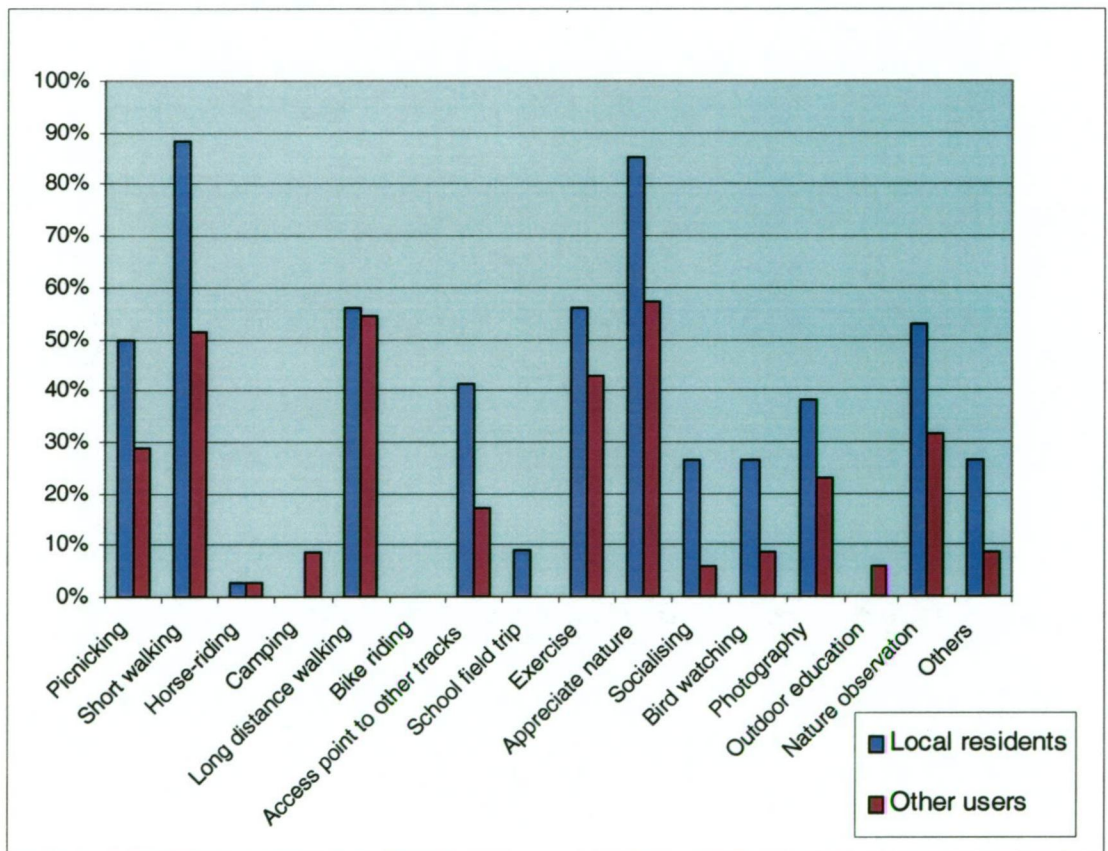
school excursions. Myrtle Forest was not attractive to bike riders, presumably because there is no bike trail linked to other parts of the Wellington Park.

Data in Figure 4.5 shows that similar patterns of activities were undertaken by both local residents and visitors from other suburbs. Short walks, appreciating nature, and long distance walking were identified as the three most popular activities for both residents of the local community and outsiders overall. However, the proportion of respondents who participated in those activities was quite different between the two groups. The majority of local respondents preferred short walking (88.20%) and appreciating nature (85.3%), while only 51% and 57% of the participants from other locations did so respectively. Long distance walking was identified as one of the most popular pursuits for the majority of outsiders, representing about 55.9% of responses. This rate equals the percentage of the locals who also enjoyed long distance walking. Exercising was another popular activity for local residents, accounting for about 56% of the response rate. Local, regular visitors seemed to equate exercise with their short walks. Nature observation also accounted for more than 50% of the responses from local residents, compared to 30% from outsiders.

Respondents from the local area preferred picnicking at Myrtle Forest more than the outsiders (percentages of 50 and 28.6 respectively). Nearly 30% of all participants indicated they used the site as an access point to other walking tracks on the Wellington Range. However, the majority of respondents (more than 40%) who use the site for this purpose are the local participants as opposed to about 17% of the outsiders. This may be because local people know that there are links between the Myrtle Forest walking track and other tracks on the Range. The outsiders may not know as, at Myrtle Forest, there are no signs to indicate the connections. Local residents preferred socialising and bird watching approximately three times more than the outsiders. Perhaps because the local respondents visited the site more frequently, they generally undertook more activities at generally higher rates than outsiders.

When questioned about other activities that the site could offer, almost 40% of the respondents who answered (13 of 34) indicated that they want to be able to barbecue. About 17% of the 34 replied that they do not want other activities: one wrote, *'Nothing. It's lovely the way it is'*. Another stated: *'None - the site could potentially offer other activities but the question is 'do you want to offer other activities?'- my answer to that would be 'no''*. Other activity-related factors mentioned (by fewer people) were provisions for interpretation (signs), for dog walking, meditation, camping, and spotlighting (of native animals).

Figure 4.5: Activities undertaken at Myrtle Forest by different user groups

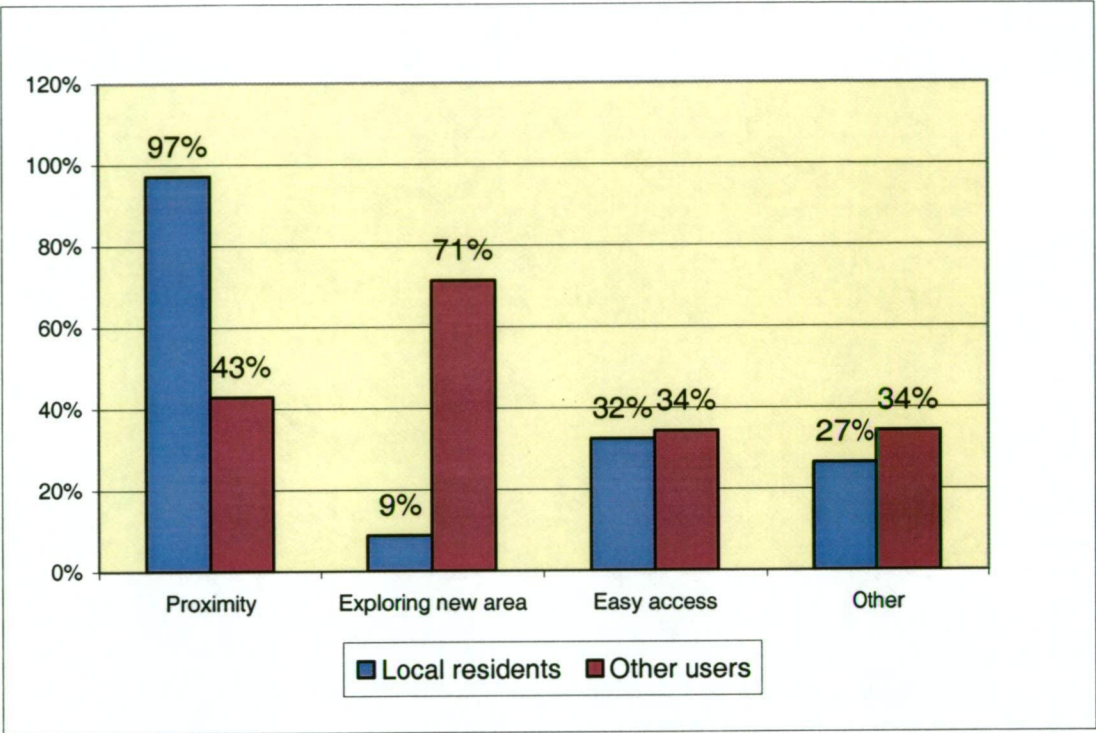


4.2.2.4 Reason for Visiting

Local residents are more likely to visit the site because it is close to their homes, while exploration of a new area was named most frequently by the outside visitors (Figure 4.6). Some respondents also gave other reasons for choosing to visit. These

included achieving a personal goal to walk to a new place, the beauty of the place, isolation and seclusion, and its uniqueness.

Figure 4.6: Reason for visiting Myrtle Forest by different user groups



4.2.2.5 Quality of the Picnic Site

The vast majority of respondents rated the quality the visitor facilities as ‘fair’ or better, as shown below. When different user groups are distinguished, it is noticeable that local residents were more critical of the facilities than the outsiders, and perhaps have higher expectations (Table 4.8).

Table 4.7: Quality rating of visitor facilities

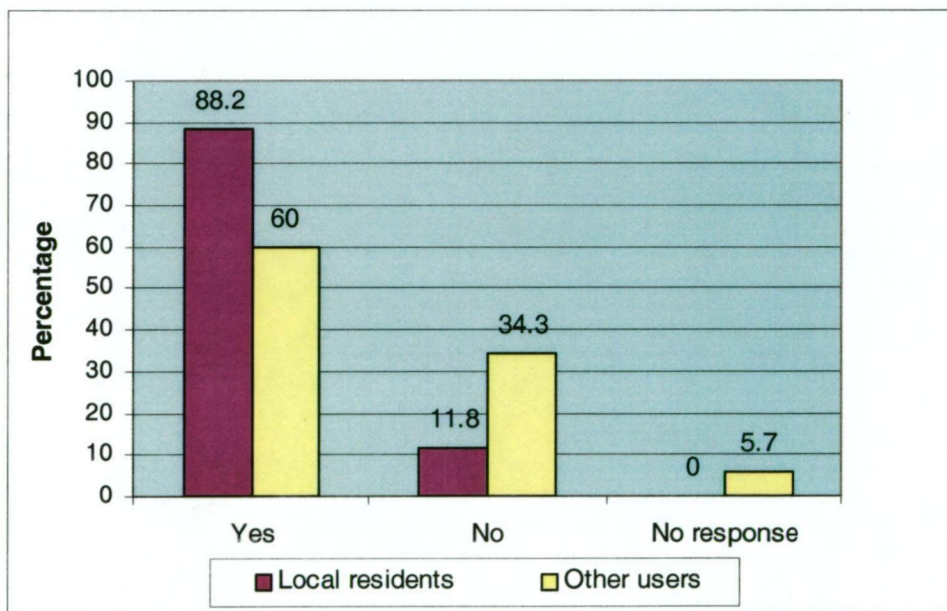
	Very poor	Poor	Fair	Good	Very good
All site users	4.30%	7.20%	58.00%	23.20%	4.30%

Table 4.8: Quality rating of visitor facilities by different user groups

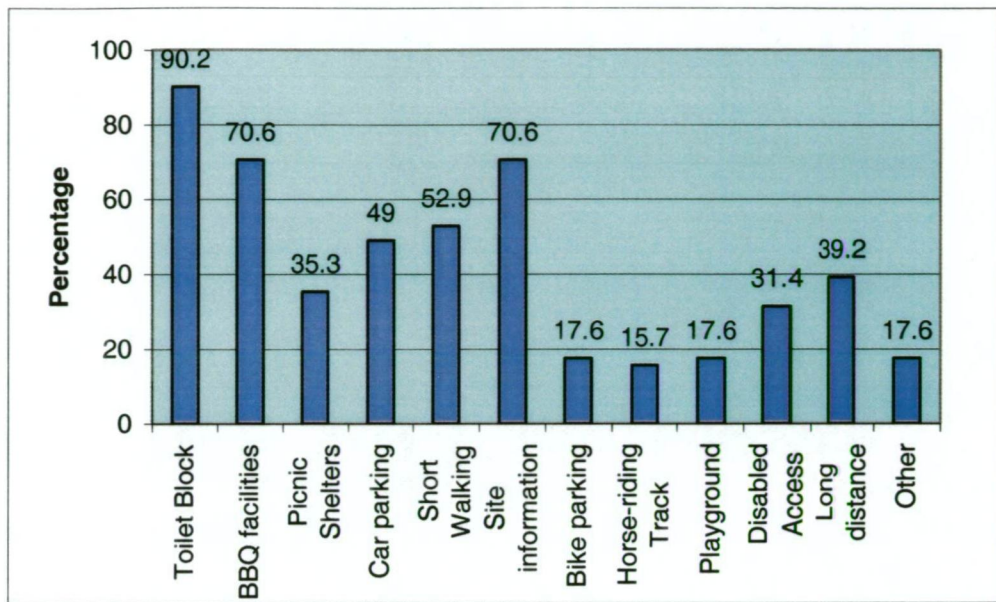
	Very poor	Poor	Fair	Good	Very good
Local residents	5.90%	11.80%	61.80%	14.70%	2.90%
Other users	2.90%	2.90%	54.30%	31.40%	5.70%

4.2.2.6 Facility Improvement

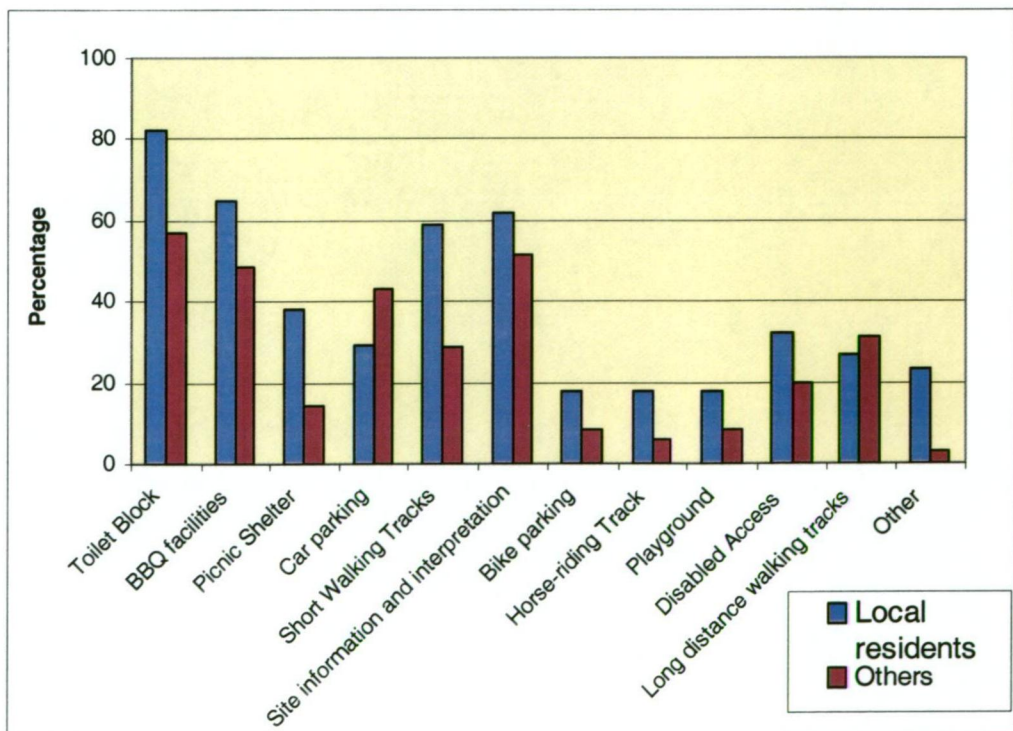
Almost 90% of the local community respondents addressed the need for site upgrading (Figure 4.7). The majority of participants from other locations also suggested that the facilities should be improved.

Figure 4.7: Different user group perceptions of the need to improve facilities

Of the respondents looking for improvements, the vast majority (90.2%) indicated that toilet facilities were needed the most (Figure 4.8). Barbecue facilities and site information were also identified as being necessary. Approximately 50% wanted improved car parking and short walking tracks. Two fifths of the participants who supported upgrading the facilities identified long distance walking tracks as being in need of attention. About a third also wanted improvement of the existing picnic shelter.

Figure 4.8: Facilities needing improvement or addition

The views between the two groups were quite similar, though outsiders saw improvements to the picnic shelter and improvement of/additions to short walking opportunities as less important (Figure 4.9).

Figure 4.9: Improvements, additions sought by different user groups

4.2.2.7 Agreement or Disagreement on Particular Facilities

When questioned about the development of a short circuit track for people who have limited time, more than 70% of all respondents ticked 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' (Table 4.9).

Table 4.9: Provision of a short circuit track

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	No response
Frequency	26	25	10	5	1	2
Percentage	37.70%	36.20%	14.50%	7.20%	1.40%	2.90%

Access for people with mobility difficulties or disabilities was supported by a large number of participants. More than 30% of respondents strongly agreed and 40% agreed with having better access for the disabled (Table 4.10).

Table 4.10: Disabled access

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	No response
Frequency	22	28	14	2	1	2
Percentage	31.90%	40.60%	20.30%	2.90%	1.40%	2.90%

There was enormous support for the idea of having interpretation signs at the beginning of the track, providing information on track conditions, and other signs on site (Table 4.11).

Table 4.11: Interpretation and information on track conditions at the start of the track

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	No response
Frequency	36	23	6	1	1	2
Percentage	52.20%	33.30%	8.70%	1.40%	1.40%	2.90%

Questioned on establishing a viewing platform and seats on the walking track, more than half of the respondents had a positive view (Table 4.12).

Table 4.12: A viewing platform and seats

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	No response
Frequency	18	25	14	3	7	2
Percentage	26.10%	36.20%	20.30%	4.30%	10.10%	2.90%

Signs providing interpretation and information, explaining features of the area, were supported by 80% of respondents. Only 15% of respondents were neutral and 1.4% disagreed (Table 4.13).

Table 4.13: Interpretation and information on general site features

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	No response
Frequency	25	30	10	-	1	3
Percentage	36.20%	43.50%	14.50%	-	1.40%	4.30%

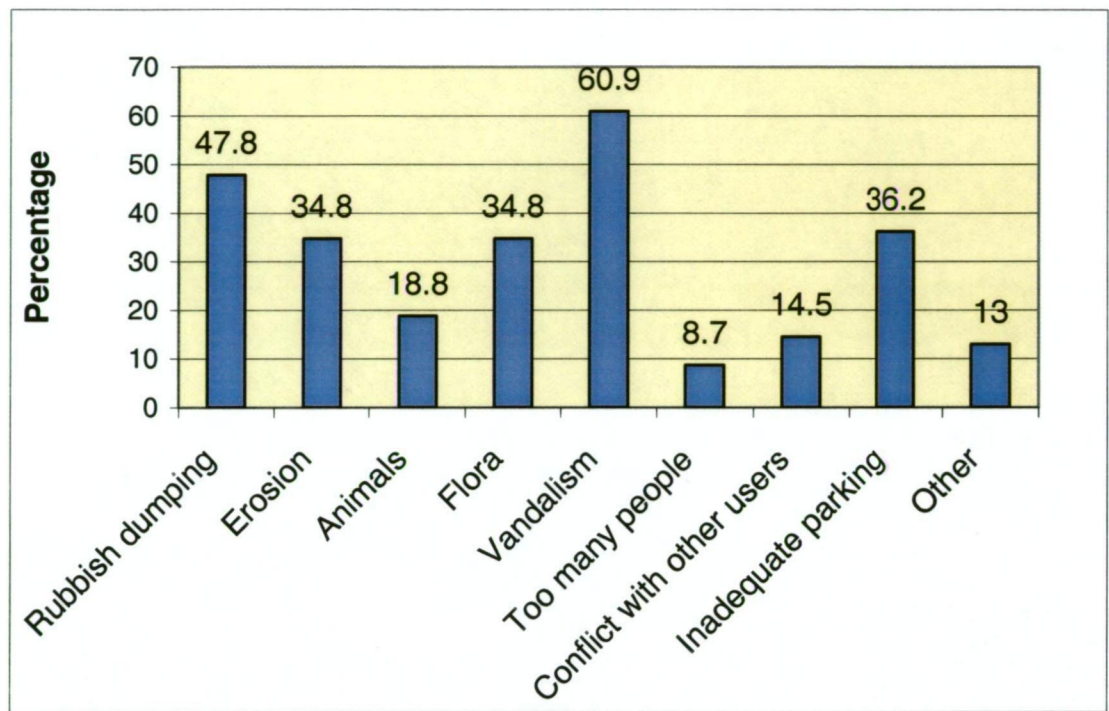
4.2.2.8 Impacts

The majority of respondents indicated that vandalism was the worst problem at Myrtle Forest, with 60% response rate as shown in Figure 4.10. The next most important impact was rubbish dumping (47.8%). Significant proportions perceived soil erosion, impacts on native flora, and inadequate parking as important.

Under the category of other impacts, approximately 13% of respondents indicated concerns. These included lack of interpretation and walking track signs; (illegal) access to domestic animals such as dogs, cats, and cattle; anti-social behaviour by some young people; the irresponsibility of pet owners (dog faeces left on the ground); lack of speed limits on Myrtle Forest Road; unsealed approach road causing

dust; shooting; risk of wildfire; illegal practices such as camping; stealing native plants; weeds; and personal and property security.

Figure 4.10: Site impacts identified by respondents



Details of those problems/impacts were also provided by site users. The vandalism and anti-social behaviours included dumping and burning stolen vehicles, nuisance behaviours of some youth such as driving dangerously on Myrtle Forest Road; excessive speed; excessive noise from engines and exhausts; noise from trail bikes; drinking and using drugs at night; painting graffiti on the picnic shelter; smashing and stealing tables; removing interpretation panels; and shooting. Participants indicated the problems were some teenagers from both the local area and nearby suburbs. One participant said: *‘People use the area at night because it is “secluded”, especially for drugs and drinking’*. Rubbish dumping led to the contamination of drinking water in the Myrtle Forest Creek. Some kinds of rubbish such as broken glass were dangerous to children. Participants also mentioned that soil erosion stemmed mainly from the drainage problems on the walking track, and also from the access of motorbikes and bicycles to the Myrtle Forest Creek bank.

Some participants stated that the parking area is inadequate, small, and difficult to use as a turning area. Impacts on flora included manfern stealing, the accessibility of motorbikes to the picnic site and damage to plant species, and the possibility of fire originating from anti-social behaviour such as vehicle burning.

4.2.2.9 Solutions Suggested to Reduce the Impacts

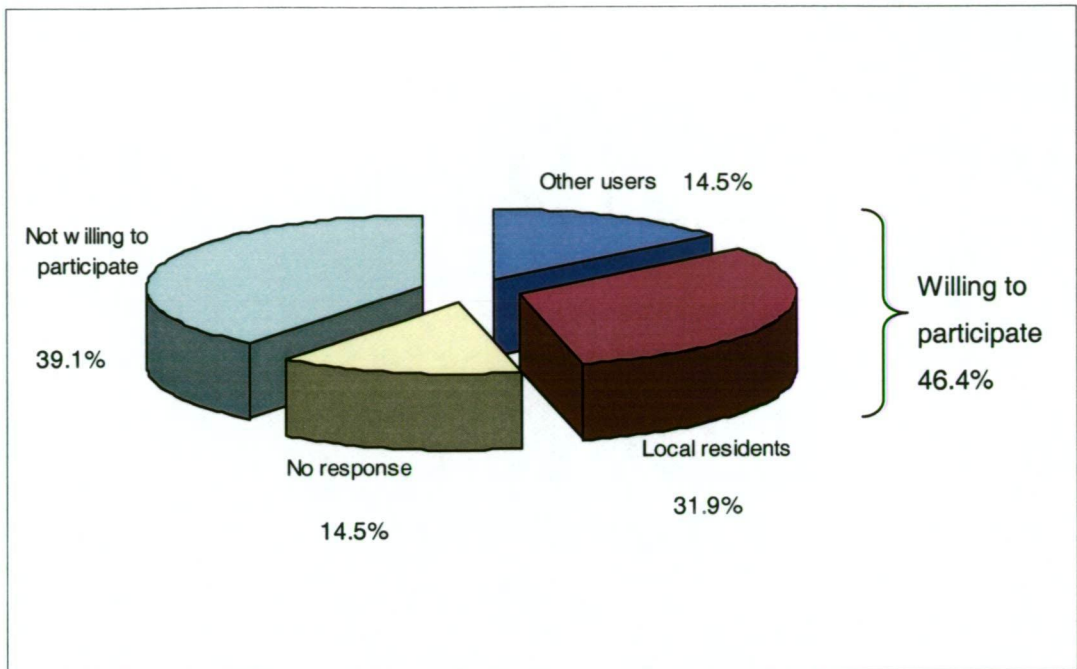
Vehicle access restrictions as far as the lower car park only was one of the most popular solutions from 30% of the respondents who gave opinions. Respondents believed that anti-social behaviours would occur less if this happened. About 17% of the participants noted that the area should be patrolled by police officers more frequently or by volunteer community rangers. Other solutions included making the area above the lower car park pedestrian access only, making the area day-use only and closed at night, establishing speed humps, pursuing offenders vigorously, enforcing National Park regulations, and keeping the facilities minimal so the area would not attract vandals.

Maintaining the walking track, especially the drainage system, would reduce soil erosion. Pets such as dogs, cats and cattle should not be allowed, to reduce impact on native wildlife and nuisance to others. Car parking places should be clearly designated.

4.2.2.10 Participation in Works

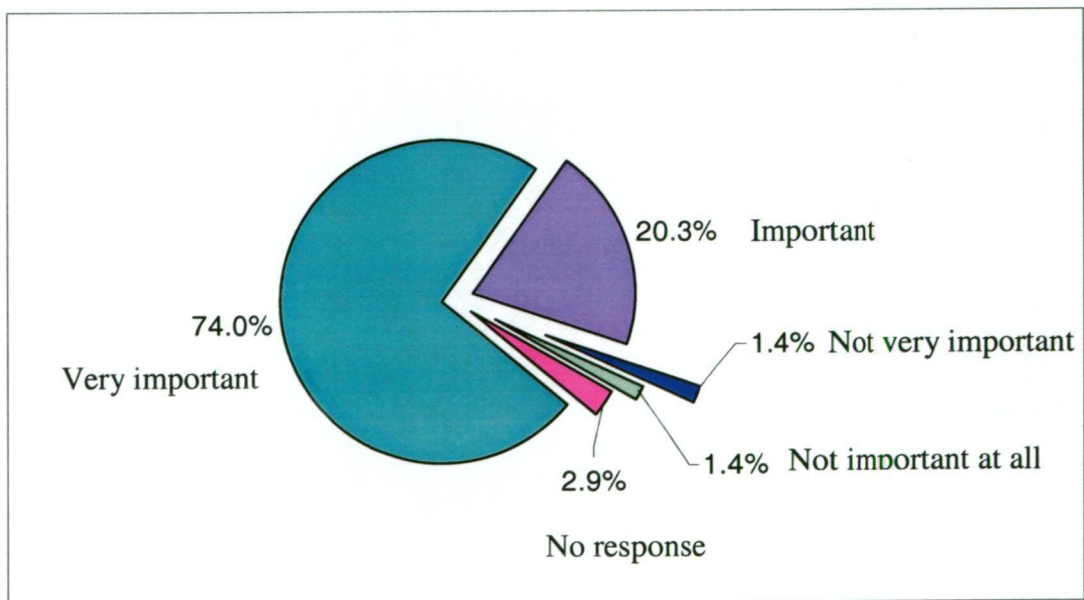
When questioned on participating in improving the Myrtle Forest Picnic Area, 46.4% indicated willingness, 39.1% did not (Figure 4.11). Understandably perhaps, of the 46.4% who were prepared to assist, 31.9% of those were local but the rest (14.5%), perhaps surprisingly, were from elsewhere.

Those who are willing indicated that they would join working bees. Some suggested that they could work as a volunteer ranger, communicate with park rangers, or donate money.

Figure 4.11: Willingness to participate in improving Myrtle Forest

4.2.2.11 Values Given to Myrtle Forest

Figure 4.12 shows that a significant majority of respondents (74%) indicated that Myrtle Forest was 'very important', and one fifth stated 'important'.

Figure 4.12: Importance of Myrtle Forest

Almost all the local residents recognised the importance of Myrtle Forest (97%). Similarly, approximately 70% of participants from other suburbs also stated it was 'very important'. Site users explained the importance of Myrtle Forest, first, in that it supplied the basic need for water, as discussed further below. Second, Myrtle Forest fulfilled recreational needs for both local people and visitors. Third, the area maintained native species of flora and fauna.

Myrtle Forest was important to local communities because it is one of the water catchment areas of the Wellington Park. Myrtle Forest Creek does not play a significant role in supplying water to the main water storage of Hobart and Glenorchy. However, the Creek has been used by local communities for drinking and daily use. An example of people's concern is given in the following quote:

The catchment supplies water to our property as well as at least two Myrtle Forest Road properties via gravity-fed poly pipes. It is therefore imperative to keep pollution and particularly human effluent out of the creek and catchment. Hence, the need for a closed system toilet or preferably signs clearly indicating nearest facility (i.e. in Collinsvale). Signs are also needed before Collinsvale telling people where toilets can be found.

Site users also mentioned that Myrtle Forest was part of a good lifestyle because of the natural beauty of the place. The rainforest vegetation, scenic views, waterfalls, Myrtle Forest Creek itself, and the quiet, unspoiled, untouched, uncrowded, and uncivilized environment of Myrtle Forest attracted both local residents and others to the area. Some noted that they felt like owners of the place. One of the local respondents claimed: 'It's my back yard'.

Most people used the area as a place of relaxation. Examples of this perspective are:

It's a beautiful spot to 'get away from it all', and should be looked after for everyone to be able to appreciate.

It defines my life and life style. It provides every healthy exercise I need. It represents everything that we should be preserving in this world

The air is fresh and clean; the sound of running water is soothing. A visit there calms the senses and re-vitalizes one's spirit.

Some site users mentioned that activities could be undertaken without having to travel too far from home.

We have socially met many people in the area and also walking dogs. It is a close and pleasant place for Hobartians to come for a day out in the bush without travelling for miles.

It is close to a capital city and yet when you are there you feel thousands of miles away from people. It is somewhere you feel relaxed and the smells and sounds are magnificent.

Many people recognised the importance of the place through the number of activities that they could undertake, such as picnicking; bushwalking to Collins Cap and Collins Bonnet and on to other tracks in the Wellington Park; learning about the flora, fauna, and history of the place; and exercising.

The importance of native species of flora and fauna was also recognised. It was noted that remnant vegetation and rare species of plants and animal should be preserved: *‘The remnant vegetation and bird life need to be preserved. Care should be taken to protect this area, not abuse and destroy it.’*

When asked for other comments on their reactions to visiting Myrtle Forest, people noted positive feelings about the experience and suggestions about site management. Some wrote that they were surprised and delighted by their visit. Some said that they enjoyed activities and the beauty of the place.

The suggestions for site management and improvement included work on the picnic shelter, car parking, barbecue facilities, addition of information boards and interpretation signs, and track maintenance. Some wrote that the site should be promoted, so that frequent visitations would lessen the level of vandalism, that vehicle access to the site should be restricted to protect it from vandalism, and that better management should be developed to control the impact on flora from manfern thieves. However, some users strongly expressed the view that the site should not be over developed, as it would bring more vandalism. An example:

I don't think it should be overly developed or expanded to encourage more people but consider the existing shelter and facilities are inadequate and exacerbate some of the problem. Access to the site including parking needed reviewing and toilet facilities are essential for water quality and environmental reasons as well as visitor enjoyment.

4.3 Key Agency Interviews

4.3.1 Summary of Main Findings

Across the key informant interviews, discussed below, the SDP was indicated as most important for future development of the area. Therefore, interviewees said that the development of the SDP should take into account a number of concerns. These include issues arising from problems such as vandalism and anti-social behaviour by some site users; improvement to or addition of visitor facilities such as car parks and toilets; and future site management that might arise from more tourist visitation. These matters needed to be addressed without losing existing values. A commonly expressed idea was that the GCC should take more responsibility in managing Myrtle Forest.

4.3.2 Interview Results

4.3.2.1 Michael Easton: the Trust

Michael Easton from the Trust pointed out that his organisation is the managing authority for the whole area of Wellington Park, including the Myrtle Forest Picnic Area. Ownership of the Park is divided amongst the GCC, the Hobart City Council (HCC) and the State (Crown Land), and most of the Park is managed by PWS. Michael also gave his opinion that there was a mismatch between the owners and the managers of the Myrtle Forest, which should be discussed in the future since, though in the Park, the Picnic Area lies within the GCC Local Government Area. One role of the Trust was to prepare and implement the *Wellington Park Management Plan 1997* (WPMT, 1997). This is a statutory requirement for the Trust. The Trust needs to ensure that the whole of the park is managed consistently in accordance with the Plan.

Five main values have been identified in the *Wellington Park Management Plan 1997* for Myrtle Forest. These include natural values of rainforest species and native animals, recreation and tourism values at a low-key recreational node, cultural heritage values, water catchment values for local residents, and scientific values. Michael also emphasised that in the process of developing the SDP for Myrtle Forest, there is the need to protect all these values equally.

When asked about the plans that have been prepared in the last 10 years that are relevant to the Myrtle Forest, Michael identified four: *The Wellington Park Management Plan 1997*, a facilities upgrading plan by the Collinsvale Precinct Committee, the “Wellington Park Walking Track Strategy (WMPT, 2003)”, and the “Fire Management Strategy (WPMT, 2000)”. The first two are most directly relevant to the Myrtle Forest area. The improvement of the Myrtle Forest Picnic Area is recommended in the *Wellington Park Management Plan 1997*. The plan for upgrading the facilities on the site by the Collinsvale Precinct Committee has been partly implemented. The shelter has already been improved, but other proposed facilities such as toilet, barbecue facilities and car parks have not proceeded pending the SDP. This Plan will define what will be established and how the site will be managed.

Michael also mentioned the “Wellington Park Walking Track Strategy” but it does not highlight anything new for Myrtle Forest. The “Fire Management Strategy” does not concern the Myrtle Forest because the possibility of wildfire is low and the vegetation does not allow for easy burning. Michael also suggested that in an extreme situation, local residents would be quicker than anyone else. Therefore, a community fireguard group would be a practical solution.

Michael said that the only plan which is specific to the future of Myrtle Forest will be the SDP. This plan may facilitate increased use of the site. The promotion of the site by Tourism Tasmania and the GCC could bring many tourists to Myrtle Forest in the future. Therefore, the SDP should take into account the potential for increasing use, not only concern about managing the existing facilities.

Michael also made comments on protecting the five key values of Myrtle Forest. He points out that tourists and local visitors visit the area because of those values. It is a challenge to develop the site without losing those values.

4.3.2.2 Mike Bidwell: GCC

Mike said that GCC shares roles and responsibilities for Myrtle Forest with the PWS and the Trust. Mike also identified the important values of the area: tourism and recreation, natural values and culturally significant values. Myrtle Forest is identified as the only natural tourist destination within the Glenorchy Municipality. The area is also the only access to Wellington Park in Glenorchy with an established infrastructure. Cultural significance can be seen from evidence of sawmill activities on the site, and a photograph of Myrtle Forest that appeared on a printed postcard presumably from 1890. The image of the postcard appeared in the book named *Glenorchy 1804-1964* authored by Alexander (1986).

Mike also identified the plans that are relevant to Myrtle Forest, such as the *Wellington Park Management Plan 1997* and the “Walking Track Strategy”. A Glenorchy Community Survey was one activity undertaken to give an opportunity to the local community to raise important issues. Ideas for improving Myrtle Forest were raised at the time. These led to the upgrading of facilities in the area by the Collinsvale/Glenlusk Precinct Committee. In this plan, GCC worked in conjunction with PWS and the Trust. The GCC was responsible for the road leading to the site, collecting rubbish, and enforcing the regulations at the site.

Mike also discussed the SDP as providing the main direction for how the area will develop. However, he also commented that this SDP might not be the end point for site development. This is because there may be some issues which arise after the implementation of the plan. For example, the plan may need to cope with an increase in the number of tourists. Mike also raised the point that the Council might need to be more involved with site management.

4.3.2.3 Grant Hall: PWS

Grant Hall said that PWS managed Myrtle Forest as part of Wellington Park. GCC has undertaken day-to-day management roles such as rubbish removal and maintaining the road. PWS has major roles in managing the walking track, weed control, and managing the use of an old fire trail that leads to private property. The site had recreational and tourism values as it has been used by both local residents and visitors. Natural values are also present, for example, the curly sedge (*Carex tasmanica*) that is listed as “vulnerable” nationally.

Grant also identified plans that are relevant to the site. They include the *Wellington Park Management Plan 1997*, and the “Walking Track Strategy”. He recognised work in conjunction with GCC and the Trust on the upgraded picnic shelter developed by the Collinsvale/Glenlusk Precinct Committee. PWS also worked on information signs for the site, but the plan ceased when the development of this SDP was discussed. Grant also said he hopes that the signs will be established after the SDP is implemented. He noted the benefits of having the “Walking Track Strategy” in that track standards were set, which is useful from a risk management point of view. Generally, PWS works on clearing fallen dead trees from the track, putting timber steps where the slope is steep to reduce the gradient and to stabilise the track, maintaining the bank of the Creek, and managing the drainage system.

Work will need to be done in the future to make the public aware of regulations. Currently, the regulation awareness officer works mainly in areas of the park where there are no signs indicating appropriate behaviour in the Park. He also suggested that local communities could also assist in raising visitor awareness of the regulations in Myrtle Forest.

Grant made comments on issues the future SDP should consider, such as track management, car parking, toilets, and vandalism. Increasing numbers of tourists to the area can be expected. Therefore, the people writing the SDP should be aware and be prepared for the coming issues, such as the potential to use the Myrtle Forest for school groups and tourists travelling to the site by bus. Other concerns include the

need to enhance visitor facilities, making the facilities functional, establishing track signs, and establishing the roles of communities in looking after the area.

Grant was also concerned about the roles of each agency in the future management of the area. Due to labour limitations in the PWS, the GCC might have to take more responsibility in future.

4.4 Other Stakeholder Consultations

4.4.1 Bushwalking Club (Known User Group) Contact

The original intention was to contact bushwalking groups who are known users of Myrtle Forest. However, contacting the best known, the Hobart Bushwalking Club, proved impractical because there was a new secretary. The new secretary had not started working; she could not readily contact other members. However, ten questionnaires were sent to the secretary but three were returned after the analysis had finished. Responses from these three were not different from the majority of other questionnaires which addressed the need for toilets, barbecue facilities, and better car parking. Because of this, the percentage of people who want these facilities should be higher than reported in 4.2.2.3. A questionnaire was also sent to another known member of the Club, and this was included in the general questionnaire results in 4.3 above. Michael Easton, the Executive Officer of the Trust, also assisted in distributing two questionnaires to two members of another walking club; these results were also included in 4.3. In addition, two other people who completed questionnaires noted they were members of a bushwalking club.

4.4.2 Collinsvale/Glenlusk Precinct Committee Meeting

A team meeting with the Collinsvale/Glenlusk Precinct Committee was held on the 9th December 2003 at the Collinsvale meeting room. This was arranged as part of the monthly meeting of Collinsvale and Glenlusk community. The Myrtle Forest SDP was one of many items on the agenda. People attending for the SDP were

representatives from Inspiring Place, the researcher and Dr Jim Russell, my supervisor from the University of Tasmania, Collinsvale/Glenlusk Precinct Committee members and some other people interested in the development of the SDP. Discussion on Myrtle Forest aimed to inform the community of progress on the SDP, focusing on my survey, and some of the ideas contributed from the site inspection by the study team. The meeting also aimed to discuss the date for a Community Walk, discussed in 4.4.3 below.

After the project brief for the SDP was explained to the meeting, progress with the questionnaire was reported. John Hepper then introduced ideas such as the impracticality and high cost of a short circuit walk and inadequate car parking. He then asked the meeting to raise their concerns. These were weed (Elisha's tears) control, the lack of site information, and vandalism. A problem during the meeting was the disagreement by one gentleman about the development of the site. A resident of Myrtle Forest Road, he was very concerned about vandalism, and opposed any development at Myrtle Forest because it might bring more visitors including vandals. After the meeting, the study team talked about this man and the need to discuss compromise with him.

The Community Walk was discussed at the Collinsvale/Glenlusk Precinct meeting and proposed for the 6th January 2004 at 6.30 in the evening. I was assigned to produce a poster with information to invite the wider community to join the Community Walk. I placed the poster in the window at the Collinsvale Store.

4.4.3 The Community Walk

The Community Walk was arranged as part of the community consultation processes. The Walk was held on schedule with an invitation to the wider Collinsvale community as mentioned previously. The Walk took place at the upper car park at Myrtle Forest and then moved to the lower car park as the discussion went on. People joining the walk included the study team, Dr Jim Russell and I, and nine residents from the local community. Most of the locals resided in Collinsvale, and

they were members of the Collinsvale/Glenlusk Precinct Committee, immediate neighbours from the Myrtle Forest Road, and other locals who were interested.

The Community Walk aimed to gain opinions on the development of Myrtle Forest from the local community. John Hepper led the talk by introducing the study team and issues to be discussed. These included the use of the car parks, anti-social behaviour and misuse of the area, walking track improvements such as attention to the drainage system and soil erosion, site information on the walking tracks and features of the site, the improvement of the picnic shelter, and the addition of toilets. The local residents were also asked to raise concerns that needed to be addressed: these included environmentally friendly toilets, restricted vehicle access, and illegal camping.

In addition, the locals proposed that the area should be for pedestrians only. Cars should be restricted to the lower car park and Myrtle Forest accessed by walking. A major new alternative proposed by one of the local people was to use a piece of land that belonged to him, one of the immediate neighbours, for a car park about 15 minutes walk down the road from the picnic area. A boom gate should be constructed to prevent cars from going further. Access to Myrtle Forest for people with mobility difficulties or for an emergency purpose could be by collecting the boom gate key from persons and at a place designated for the purpose. The lower car park could be used as a picnic area, and walkers could enjoy the walk up the existing road to the present picnic area.

4.4.4 Discussions with Neighbours

Initially, another intention of the study was also to contact the immediate neighbours to discuss concerns related to the use of Myrtle Forest. The immediate neighbours appeared to bear the brunt of impacts emerging from the use of the area because they reside on the approach road to Myrtle Forest. However, as my survey progressed, it became increasingly apparent that the neighbours were also the regular users of the area and many of them had completed the questionnaire either on-site, or collected a

questionnaire at the Collinsvale shop or obtained one from the school. There were six households along the Myrtle Forest Road and eight responses had been obtained from these. Considering time constraints, the program for discussion with the neighbours was not implemented.

4.5 Conclusion

I fulfilled my role as participant researcher by completing the review of baseline data for Myrtle Forest (Chapter 3) and the community survey and key agency interviews, as prescribed in the Stakeholder Consultation Phase of the Work Program Stage 1. The findings of these were forwarded to John Hepper, the consultant, to be applied in the development of the draft SDP. The other stakeholder consultation events that relate more to my observer researcher role are also covered, as are Steering Committee and team meetings in the information-gathering phases for the SDP, up to the presentation of the draft SDP to the Steering Committee. The final work for the preparation of the draft (after John Hepper had discussed issues and some ideas for options with the Steering Committee on 15th January 2004) was done entirely by Inspiring Place, and I was not involved. My observer researcher role is followed up in detail in the next chapter, where I focus on selected literature of participatory planning and on the development of criteria for evaluating the SDP process.

CHAPTER 5: PARTICIPATORY PLANNING - LITERATURE REVIEW AND CRITERIA DEVELOPMENT

My review of planning theory literature was influenced by the study framework that was predetermined by Inspiring Place Consultants. The community consultation processes were a major focus in the Inspiring Place study program for the SDP. Roberts (1995) identified 'community consultation' as a method applied to gain public participation. In order to evaluate this program, I reviewed literature on planning theories, emphasising aspects of public participation applicable to natural resource management planning.

I begin the review of planning theories by addressing the broad historical context, and by identifying some classifications of theories with a view to showing those ideas relevant to public participative planning. Following this, the terms "community consultation", "public involvement", and "public participation" are defined and distinguished. Ideas underpinning approaches to public participative planning are identified. Features of successful public participation processes are characterised and discussed. These features are evaluated and judged as to which are most appropriate for planning of this kind. The end point of my enquiry is a set of criteria for evaluating the consultative processes used for the SDP.

5.1 Context of Planning Theory

Planning is something most people do in everyday life. Some specific groups, such as project managers, town planners and natural resource managers, are skilled in particular aspects of planning. One factor in common is that their planning is concerned with future courses of action. Worboys *et al.* (2001:115) noted that

‘planning is a process for determining “what should be”, which is usually defined by a series of objectives, and for selecting actions which can help achieve the goals determined.’

Friedmann (1987:36) suggested that theory is necessary because it assists the planner in understanding boundaries, meaning and various purposes of the planning process. Planning theory also assists in guiding and establishing frameworks for practice because ‘good theorising can motivate, define, conceptualise, drive forward and inform practice’ (Lockwood, 2004:3).

5.2 Classifications of Theories of the Planning Process

Various classifications of planning theory have been developed. Classification is important because it ‘... helps in identifying the range of views about what planning should try to achieve, how it should be done, and what it should be about’ (Lockwood, 2004:3). I now introduce the four major traditions identified by Friedmann (1987), another classification from organisational management, and a classification from environmental planning developed by Briassoulis (1989) in order to search for views leading to public participative planning.

5.2.1 Four Major Traditions

In Friedmann’s (1987:73) view, four major traditions of planning thought can be seen as comprised of social reform, social mobilisation, policy analysis, and social learning, and his ideas on these are discussed below. Social reform and social mobilisation originated in the first half of the 19th century. Policy analysis and social learning were developed between the Great Depression and World War Two.

Planners in the social reform tradition traceable to the early 1800s and Saint Simon believed that the State played an important role of social guidance. Only professional planners were accepted in what was seen as executive functions. Much later, policy

analysis was to engage in scientific methods and formal processes in planning. These processes were goal formulation, identification of alternatives, prediction and evaluation of consequences, decision-making, implementation and feedback. However, practitioners in the policy analysis tradition tended to serve the benefits of the authorities in power. Theorists identified with a social learning tradition believed that knowledge emerged from experience, or learning by doing. Social experimentation, careful observation, and willingness to admit mistakes and learn from them were believed to be the scientifically correct way to effect change.

The fourth tradition Friedmann (1987: 83) distinguished is social mobilisation. Social reform and policy analysis had addressed the role of the state and looked toward a “scientific politics”. In contrast, social mobilisation planning is very different: it is conducted politically and does not incorporate scientific knowledge in the decision making-process. Main ideas in this tradition are focused on self-empowerment of households, local communities and regions. Insofar as social mobilisation is based on ‘direct collective action “from below”’ (Friedman, 1987:83), this tradition is perhaps the most likely to incorporate community consultative processes.

5.2.2 Classification from Organisational Management

Management of an organization is known for two distinct approaches: top-down and bottom-up. Hockings and Carter (1998:645) said that a top-down approach is initiated and conducted by the senior management of a few experts. Stakeholders have no opportunity to be involved in project consideration, or if there is any opportunity, it is only used as a tool for achieving management goals. In other words, people in power simply tell stakeholders about the predefined projects, while the latter have no real opportunity to engage in the decision-making process.

On the contrary, stakeholder-initiated planning is the main concept in a bottom-up approach. This approach addresses the issues of concern to stakeholders, which may be different from managers or people in power (Hockings and Carter, 1998:645). A bottom-up approach is likely to be more relevant to community consultative

planning. However, there are questions as to whether the bottom-up approach is best in isolation. Van Zyl (1995) as cited in Lovell *et al.* (2002:18) argued that both bottom-up and top-down approaches have both benefits and drawbacks. Both approaches were seen as essential: they must meet in the middle where one's benefits can fulfil the other's disadvantages (Van Zyl, 1995). For example, Van Zyl (1995) suggested that the bottom-up approach has benefits in achieving local ownership of a process, while a top-down approach can provide a structured program of overall planning, coordination and long-term financial support.

5.2.3 Classification from Environmental Planning

Briassoulis (1989) offered a systematic analysis of six alternative environmental planning approaches in order to select courses of action to resolve environmental problems. The approaches were comprehensive/rational, incremental, adaptive, contingency, advocacy, and participatory/consensual.

Comprehensive/rational planning was an early approach utilised in environmental planning. It aimed to analyse objectively and exhaustively the environmental conditions, to develop solutions to the problems analysed, and to choose and apply the best solutions that fulfil objective criteria. Professionally, experts took primary roles in planning because professional skills, both scientifically and technically, were required. This approach largely ignored community involvement in the planning process.

Incremental planning emphasised the crisis management of environmental problems (Briassoulis, 1989:386). This approach was also known as *ad hoc* planning. Courses of action were selected based on ease of implementation, and without considering particular objectives; some particular interest groups tended to influence the process, whether power elites or lobby groups (Worboys *et al.*, 2001:117).

Adaptive planning is a successive and continuous process that allows flexibility at each stage of planning. Solutions to problems were developed according to the

prediction of future events. Careful adaptation to problems in the predictable future was considered crucial. Briassoulis (1989:386) pointed out that this process concerns learning by experience, and the most appropriate solutions were made according to the resources available. This means that mistakes may occur and planning processes may involve uncertainty.

A contingency planning approach is applied when dealing with unpredictable environmental problems. These problems may cause unexpected and severely adverse repercussions (Briassoulis, 1989:387). Examples of those problems are wildfire, widely spread disease, or technological accidents. Responses or alternative courses of action need to be developed immediately to avoid the worst consequences that may occur.

Serving two different interest groups at the same time was acknowledged by advocacy approach planners as impossible (Briassoulis, 1989:387). Solutions to environmental issues largely fulfil the interests and philosophy of people served. Data and methods used may be manoeuvred to support group interests. Briassoulis (1989:388) also noted that the advocacy approach can dominate environmental issues; the “winners” can be seen in terms of the survival of the fittest: ‘whether the outcome is an environmentally beneficial one depends on who survives the struggle.’

The sixth approach is participatory/consensual planning. This approach focused on the utilisation of environmental mediation and negotiation to solve conflicts. All interested parties were given chances to present their solutions to debated problems. Solutions proposed were considered and channelled to find common thoughts. Agreement was sought where opinions were contrasting, and costs and benefits were also distributed evenly and equitably among the parties. It is widely cited by planning theorists that public participation is believed to legitimise planning outcomes, reduce citizen alienation, avoid conflict, give meaning to legislation, build support for agency programs, tap local knowledge, provide feedback on program outcomes, contribute to community education, and enhance democratic processes by

increasing government accountability (Creighton, 1981; Daneke, 1983; Lyden *et al.*, 1990 in Worboys *et al.*, 2001:119).

It is apparent that the participatory/consensual approach is the most likely to incorporate community consultative processes, though many aspects of these processes still need to be considered. These aspects will be explored further in the next section. Considering the importance of a community consultative approach in my thesis, clarification of the terms “public involvement”, “consultation”, and “public participation” should be undertaken. I now define, distinguish, and interpret these terms, before moving to explore the context of public consultative planning in more detail.

5.3 Approaches to Community Participative Planning

5.3.1 Definition and Interpretation

It has been recognised by a number of authorities and affected interest groups that traditional decision-making approaches are insufficient in solving environmental problems. Citizen involvement or public participation has been suggested as a possible, though partial, solution to these problems. The degree and conditions of public participation approaches and processes have become the topic of a tremendous amount of argument about the criteria that mark successful citizen participation (Ren *et al.*, 1995). Roberts (1995) suggested that public participation has its roots in participatory democracy, which is based on equality and the belief that everyone has the right and power to speak for their own interests. Approaches based on participatory democracy emphasise the integral involvement of participants and their range of interests throughout the planning process (Moote *et al.*, 1997:877).

A definite beginning for public participation in decision-making processes is difficult to ascertain; however, signs of a greater demand for public participation rose increasingly since the world wars and the Great Depression (Roberts, 1995:221).

Participatory processes have continued to evolve since the end of the 1960s, when government institutions began to acknowledge and incorporate public roles in their plans. Examples of these were the inclusion of public involvement in the *Town and Country Planning Act 1968* in England and Wales, the US *National Environmental Policy Act 1969* (NEPA), the Environmental Assessment and Review Process 1973 in Canada, and by the World Bank in 1993 (Roberts, 1995:223).

The attention to public involvement has contributed to the confusion in definitions. Many people applied the terms “public involvement”, “consultation”, and “public participation” interchangeably, while questions on meanings and differences amongst the terms remained (Roberts, 1995:224). Cuthbertson (1983:102) and Pretty and Hine (1999:5) expressed similar ideas to Steelman and Archer (1997:72), who argued that ‘public participation is an ambiguous term that means many different things to many different people’. Many planning theorists, however, have developed particular meanings for public participation, along with consultation and public involvement. Creighton (1981:3), cited in Predebon (1998:5), defined public participation as ‘... a process, or processes, by which interested and affected individuals, organizations, agencies and government entities are consulted and included in the decision-making of a government agency or corporate entity’. Ren *et al.* (1995:2) adopted a similar definition, where participation is a ‘forum for exchange that is organized for the purpose of facilitating communication between government, citizens, stakeholders and interest groups, and businesses regarding a specific decision or problem’.

Roberts (1995:224) argued that public involvement is a broader process for involving the public in the decision-making process, while consultation and participation are only techniques applied as part of public involvement. Both consultation and participation involve interactive communications between authorities and affected people. The main differences between the terms can be seen through examining the level to which those involved gain power to influence, share, or control decision-making (World Bank, 1993:1).

Nevertheless, the terms “public participation” and “public involvement” are associated with incorporating public input into the decision-making process. This idea has been adopted in the framework for this research. “Consultation” incorporates education, information sharing, and negotiation (Roberts, 1995). There are, however, many levels or degrees of public involvement in decision-making processes. Steelman and Ascher (1997:71) suggested ‘public participation spans the spectrum from traditional representative governance to direct citizen and interest group involvement’. Since it is now a widely accepted principle that the public should be involved in decision-making, to what degree the public should, or can, be involved, is an issue I now pursue.

5.3.2 Levels of Participation

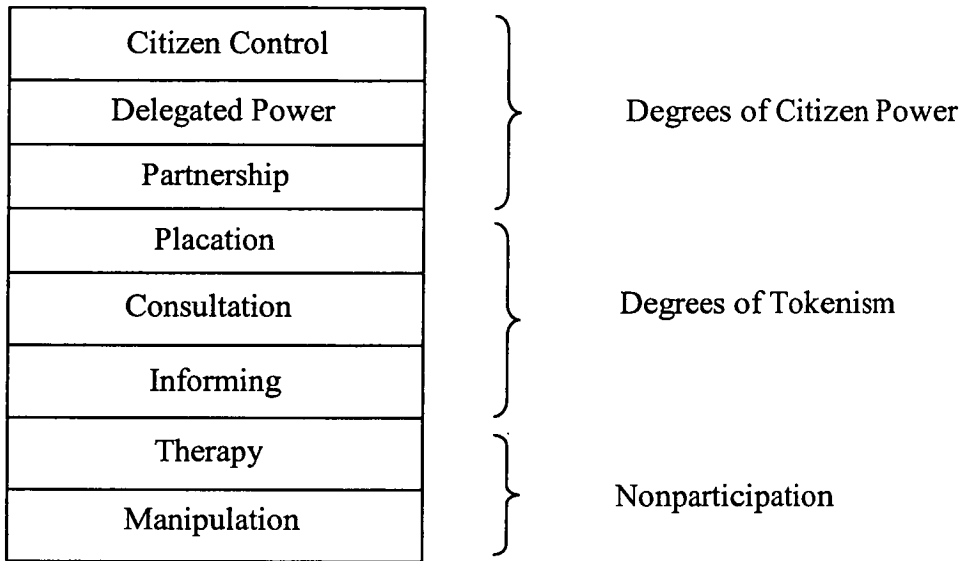
Participation is a common ground of democracy, which can lead to fairness and equality amongst individuals (Roberts, 1995:223). Democracy is dependent upon the degree of participation because different approaches towards participation reveal the degree of power distributed to the public. In order to express this idea, various approaches and different levels of participation are discussed in this section.

Arnstein (1969) developed the idea of the ladder of participation, one of the earliest and most often cited typologies of public participation (Jackson, 2001:137). The ladder distinguished the extent of the public’s power in the decision-making process. Eight kinds of participation and methods are identified, and grouped into higher orders as shown in Figure 5.1. They are nonparticipation (manipulation and therapy); tokenism (informing, consultation, and placation); and citizen power (partnership, delegated power, and citizen control).

Manipulation and therapy are described as “nonparticipation” because their objective is not to enable people to participate in planning. Instead, they enable people in power to “educate” or “cure” the non-powerful and deny power to the public. Arnstein (1969:218) gave a good example of Citizen Advisory Committees of urban renewal plans in the USA. The Committees comprised the socially elite group, and

the subcommittee minority groups. This latter group, which was meant to protect the rights of Negroes in the program, had no power to influence the plan but were used to give the impression there was grassroots involvement in the plan.

Figure 5.1: Arnstein's (1969) "ladder of participation"



(Source: Arnstein, 1969: 217)

"Therapy" subjects citizens to clinical group treatment because powerlessness has been seen by experts as mental illness. Public involvement aimed only to cure the "pathology" rather than change the views of powerful people, for example, about racism and victimisation (Arnstein, 1969:218). These views were held to generate the pathologies. An example is that a doctor in a hospital in Pennsylvania instructed a father of a seriously ill baby to feed it with sugar water. After the baby died, the father complained to the local Community Action Agency. This Agency, instead of investigating the hospital for possible malpractice, invited the parent to attend childcare sessions (Arnstein, 1969:219).

Arnstein (1969:218) classified informing, consultation, and placation as tokenism, because these practices allow the powerless to hear, to speak, and to be advised. However, the final decision is retained by the authorities; sometimes, the decision

had already been made by authorities before consulting the public (Worboys *et al.*, 2001:119). Informing is a first step to legitimise public participation. Citizens should be told about their rights, responsibilities, and alternatives. However, the danger is the public is not allowed to offer feedback. This one-way communication is largely carried out through 'the news media, pamphlets, posters, and responses to inquiry' (Arnstein, 1969:218). Meetings can also be widely used to provide only superficial information. Questions can be discouraged or answered irrelevantly.

Consultation involves inviting the public's opinion on a particular issue after information is provided. Arnstein (1969:218) explained that consultation seemed to legitimise full public participation because communication and interaction occurred between the public and people in power. However, the downside is that there is no guarantee that public preferences and comments are taken into account. Attitude surveys, neighbourhood meetings, and public hearings can be used frequently as a tool for public consultation and yet be only tokenism.

Placation is described by Arnstein (1969:220) as the stage where the public can begin to have some degree of influence, but basically remain tokenism. Some members of the public can be selected to sit on a committee or agency, and given certain power to influence the decision-making process. These representatives can often be outnumbered and outvoted by the powerful elite or opposed interest groups. In some cases, these representatives are allowed to advise, but authorities have power to judge and decide whether their advice is practical or feasible (Arnstein, 1969:220).

Increasing degrees of public participation can be seen on the upper rungs of the ladder, which include partnership, delegated power, and citizen control (Arnstein, 1969:217). In a partnership, redistribution of power between the public and power holders occurs through negotiation processes. An agreement to share planning and decision-making responsibilities can be made through established structures such as joint policy boards and planning committees. Arnstein suggested that in order to create an effective partnership, citizen leaders must be accountable; leaders should be paid for their time and professional work; and resources should be available to

employ professional staff such as lawyers, technicians and community organizers who work for leaders. These conditions and resources, for example, would enable a community to initiate a plan of its own and to oppose plans not reviewed by community bodies (Arnstein, 1969:222).

The idea of delegated power emphasises that the majority of seats in decision-making bodies are given to the public (Arnstein, 1969:222). This ensures that citizen preferences are taken into account. Examples are when residents have created a corporation with delegated power to create a city plan, or given power to veto an authority's project, if negotiation processes do not work.

Citizen control occurs when the power of residents to control a project or plan is guaranteed by having the full responsibility for policy and managerial aspects of a project (Arnstein, 1969:223). Citizens are also given the sole ability to negotiate the conditions under which others may change policy and these aspects (Arnstein, 1969:223). An example is a neighbourhood corporation with no intermediaries between the corporation, and where funding is provided. Examples were the Hough Area Development Corporation in Cleveland with \$1.8 million awarded to plan an economic development program, and the Southwest Alabama Farmers Cooperative Association which was funded approximately \$1 million for a marketing cooperative for food and livestock (Arnstein, 1969:223). None of these models achieved true citizen control, however, because approval powers and accountability still rested with the city councils (Arnstein, 1969:223). Arnstein (1969) believed that true public involvement is not valid unless citizens were given real power in decision-making.

Steelman and Ascher (1997) identified four broad types of public involvement in policy making, namely, standard representative policy-making; referenda; non-binding direct involvement; and binding direct policy making by non-governmental representatives. They also evaluated referenda, public comment procedures, hearings and citizen advisory committees, which are methods associated with the four types, against the process and outcome criteria of openness, legitimacy, technical

competency and timeliness. Their conclusion was that different methods and models of public participation have different advantages and disadvantages. Therefore, to make public involvement exercises more effective, benefits and drawbacks, as well as trade-offs, should be considered (Steelman and Ascher, 1997:86).

Webler (1995:42) expressed a similar idea to Lawrence *et al.* (1997:578) who suggested that processes applied to reach outcomes are as important as the outcomes themselves. Likewise, Webler *et al.* (2001:435) introduced five perspectives on good public participation from a study of public involvement in forest planning in northern New England and New York. The five were legitimacy of the process, ideological discussion, fairness of the process, equality among participants, and leadership and compromise. Moote *et al.* (1997:877) evaluated the public participation program in land use planning on four criteria: representation and access, ongoing basis of public participation, information exchange and learning, and the public's role as decision-maker.

5.4 Features/ Dimensions of Successful Public Participation

Moote *et al.* (1997:877) claimed that traditional methods used in public participation processes do not address public concerns and interests. The public hearing is a good example of a traditional method that does not provide adequate opportunity for the public to represent their interest, because only a very small proportion of participants have the opportunity to speak (Webler and Renn, 1995:24). Moreover, hearings are held primarily to satisfy legal requirements, and do not really aim to promote public input. Checkoway (1981), as cited in Webler and Renn (1995:24), found that attendance of the public in hearings is low because information provided is too technical and hard to understand, and outcomes of the hearings are mostly biased and favoured only some interest groups.

Drawbacks of traditional participation methods stimulated attempts to explore a true and effective public participation and its methods. The search for levels of public

participation (Arnstein, 1969), its evaluative techniques (Cuthbertson, 1983), and the development of principles or criteria for effective public participation (Steelman and Ascher, 1997; Moote *et al.*, 1997; Lawrence *et al.*, 1997; Jackson 2001; Webler *et al.*, 2001) has been carried out in the past few decades. However, questions on what is good public participation still remain because different people have different ideas about what successful public participation should be like (Webler *et al.*, 2001). In particular, a pertinent question is what the criteria for success should emphasise: the process to reach an outcome, or the outcome of the process?

Some theorists such as Moote *et al.* (1997) believed that both outcomes and processes could be used as factors to evaluate the success of public participation. Many planning theorists, mostly from a procedural justice viewpoint, believe that processes applied to finalise the outcome are as important as the decision itself (Lawrence *et al.*, 1997:579). Lind and Tyler (1988:207), as cited in Lawrence *et al.* (1997:580) emphasised that the fairness of a public participation process can enhance public satisfaction, even though project outcomes might not respond to their interests. Webler (1995:42) supported the importance of the process: the project outcome is necessarily important, but ‘it is also important that the decision-making procedure be designed to engender fair and competent participation’.

After reviewing selected public participation literature, I extracted five aspects of good public participation. These aspects very much relate to the process of achieving the project outcomes, and are legitimacy of the process (Webler *et al.*, 2001; Steelman and Ascher, 1997); fairness and equality of the process (Webler *et al.*, 2001; Lawrence *et al.*, 1997); information exchange and learning (Moote *et al.*, 1997; Steelman and Ascher, 1997); continuity of public participation (Moote *et al.*, 1997; Jackson, 2001); quality of decision-making and responsible leadership (Moote *et al.*, 1997; Lawrence *et al.*, 1997; Webler *et al.*, 2001).

5.4.1 Legitimacy

First, legitimacy is one factor that drives a successful participation process. Webler *et al.* (2001) said that legitimacy is based largely in how well conflict is managed during the process. Because it is impossible to make everyone agree, Webler *et al.* (2001) suggested using three methods for dealing with conflict. First, any decisions should be made by consensus. Second, the basis of the participatory process should be transparency. Third, any decisions and recommendations should be made based on evidence rather than preferences of some interest groups.

Webler *et al.* (2001:441) suggested that the process is legitimate if it uses consensual decision-making. That is, participants must not be forced, persuaded, or influenced by anyone or any circumstances to agree. Webler *et al.* (2001:444), however, claimed that people do not need to agree with the outcomes or the recommendations; they only need to consent to it. The public will not consent unless they are informed, think they have a fair and reasonable opportunity to influence the result, and a justification for the decision can be made.

Transparency in a public participation process can legitimise its outcomes because the public will accept a decision if they acknowledge that the process was undertaken properly and fairly (Webler *et al.*, 2001). Public acceptability of an outcome can be fostered by avoiding any sense of secrecy and doubt. Webler *et al.* (2001) suggested writing a plan for public involvement clearly from the beginning to the end stage of a process to ensure transparency. Aspects that should be addressed in the plan are, for example, at what stages the public will be incorporated in the process; how public input will be weighted and measured; and the extent of public power to make a decision (Steelman and Ascher, 1997; Webler *et al.*, 2001).

Webler *et al.* (2001:441) claimed that a public participation process can be legitimate if its decisions are driven by evidence. This evidence refers to information gathered from both local people and scientific knowledge. Webler *et al.* (2001:441) suggested using a consistent method, perhaps, by peer review to evaluate the accuracy of

information. Recommendations should also be justified with information, and decisions should be made without favouring elite preferences.

5.4.2 Fairness and Equality of the Process

Successful public participation processes should be fair and unbiased (Webler *et al.* (2001:443). Key elements defining fair process can be reflected through equality of access to the process and fairness of facilitation. Equality of access means that all stakeholders and individuals gain an equal chance to engage in the process. Moote *et al.* (1997:879) pointed out that the distribution of power among participants is important because the general public feels that partiality of authorities towards power elites has a great effect on their input. The public should gain the opportunity to speak out on their concerns and interests, and all need to be heard and to be taken into account. The process should not limit the scope of discussion (Webler *et al.*, 2001:444). Moote *et al.* (1997:879) suggested that the decision-making authority should arrange an informal forum where everyone can have their say. The process or forum for public opinion should aim to promote real public input, not merely satisfy legal requirements (Webler and Renn, 1995:24). An example of unfair access to the process can be seen in the kind of public hearing described above by Webler and Renn (1995:24), with few members of the public able to participate.

The second element of fairness is associated with facilitation. Webler *et al.* (2001:443) claimed that professionally skilled facilitators are crucial to keep the process constantly flowing and focussed. Process facilitators should also be fair and not favour any particular interest groups (Webler *et al.*, 2001:443). As a result, all participants should be given opportunities to express their views, concerns and desires.

5.4.3 Information Exchange and Learning

Successful public participation processes should incorporate information exchange and learning. Steelman and Ascher (1997:83) suggested that public participation should open an opportunity for new and different types of information to enter the

process, because information is a key factor in decision-making. Arnstein (1969:78) included exchanging and learning information in the “consultation” stage in her ladder of participation: the main idea is to invite citizen opinions and incorporate them into the decision, providing legitimacy for the process. Moote *et al.* (1997:879) suggested that information should be fully and freely interchanged between participants and authorities responsible for decision-making, ensuring that the needs and concerns of each affected group and individual are addressed during the planning process. Thus, technical information, local knowledge, experience, and attitudes should be gathered (Hockings and Carter, 1998:648). Interactive communication between authorities and participants also assists in better understanding of each other’s values, interests, and concerns, as well as the legal and policy constraints on agencies (Moote, *et al.*, 1997:879). Webler *et al.* (2001:43) support this argument by saying that ‘it is not the number of people present that matters, but the quality of the interaction for those that do participate’.

5.4.4 Continuity of Public Participation

It is also suggested that a process should incorporate public involvement on an ongoing basis (Fulton, 1996:1; Renn *et al.*, 1995:361-2; Moote *et al.* (1997:879). This means that people should be informed at the very beginning of project consideration on how the public will be incorporated in discussion, and to what degree people will have real decision-making power. Jackson (2001:139) built on Dorsey’s (1994) work in research on British Columbia’s consensus planning processes, suggesting five ongoing stages of good public participation. First, stakeholders and individuals should be informed about the project or issue in the first stage. Second, the public should be provided with background information on the project and issues confronting the project to raise the level of public awareness. People’s opinions on the issues should be asked and encouraged. Alternative solutions should be encouraged. Finally, decision-making should be shared between an authority and all participants.

5.4.5 Quality of Decision-making and Responsible Leadership

Many planning theorists believed that the public should have power in the decision-making process. Arnstein (1969) said that public involvement was meaningless unless it accorded true decision-making power to the citizen. Moote *et al.* (1997:880) also argued that the public should actually participate in the process of making the final decision, not only be given the power to comment. Examples from many theorists show various ways in which the public have been given power to make decisions. Partnerships, delegated power and citizen control illustrated in Arnstein's (1969) ladder of participation are examples of increasing levels of control.

However, if it is impractical for the public to make a decision, Webler *et al.* (2001:444) pointed out that responsibility rests with the appointed authority. Therefore, leadership by skilled and experienced decision-makers is very important in building trust and respectfulness amongst participants and with the decision-maker. According to Webler *et al.* (2001:444) and Lawrence *et al.* (1997:583), the public are more likely to understand the reasons behind the decision if they are informed; if they have a fair chance to influence the outcome; and if they have an explanation and justification for final decisions. Thus, the public can trust and respect the decision-maker if a responsible process of true public participation as covered in sections 5.4.1 to 5.4.4 above. Webler *et al.* (2001:445) also emphasised that because it is impossible to make everyone agree, 'leaders should make the best decisions they can and take the consequences'.

5.5 Criteria for Evaluation of Public Participation Processes

The selected literature review of features for success presented above suggested a number of aspects to be considered in evaluating the efficacy of public participation processes, despite the difficulties they present (and the disagreements). These were legitimacy; fairness and equality; information exchange and learning; continuity; and quality of decision-making and responsible leadership. Each of these aspects, as covered by various authors, includes factors suitable for process evaluation. I

developed criteria for the application of these aspects to my study because they are appropriate and reasonable for evaluating the SDP community consultative program. Aspects and factors for process evaluation, together with the criteria, are summarised in Table 5.1.

5.6 Summary

This chapter has provided an overview of planning theory, focusing on public participation. Classifications of planning theory were identified to show ideas relevant to public participative planning. Characteristics of public participation processes, including definition, interpretation, and degree of public participation, were also addressed. The chapter has also illustrated features of successful public participation processes. These features were developed into a set of criteria for an effective public participation process. I intend to apply the criteria, 14 in all under the five categories of aspects listed above in 5.5, to evaluate the consultative aspects of the SDP process.

Table 5.1: Public participation aspects and criteria to be used for evaluation of the SDP consultative processes

Aspects for effective public participation process	Factors for SDP process evaluation	Criteria for efficacy
<p>1. Legitimacy of process and decision (Webler <i>et al.</i>, 2001:441)</p>	<p>1. Consensus based decisions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Participants should not be forced, persuaded, or influenced to agree on any given assumptions, processes, or solutions. <p>2. Transparency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Process should be undertaken fairly and equally. ▪ Process should avoid any sense of secrecy or a lack of information; thus, the planning process should be written clearly from the beginning to final stage of the process by addressing the following elements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - who or which agency is responsible for making decisions; - at what stages the public can make input; - how public input will be weighted and measured; and - what the decision-making process will be. 	<p>1. Many possible ideas for the conduct of the process and how its outcomes will be generated should be discussed, and if differences remain, consensus should be sought.</p> <p>2. A detailed working process needs to be publicly available, stating clearly the roles of stakeholders and the decision-maker; how public input is to be incorporated; and how the decision is to be made.</p> <p>3. Information that is to be used as basis for any decision-making and recommendations should be reviewed for its accuracy and evaluated consistently.</p> <p>4. Decisions and recommendations should be made based on sound evidence.</p>

	<p>3. Evidence-based decisions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information is evaluated in consistent ways, and recommendations should be made based on evidence. Peer review to ensure accuracy should be carried out. 	
<p>2. Fairness and equality of the process (Webler <i>et al.</i>, 2001)</p>	<p>1. Access to the process (Moote <i>et al.</i>, 1997)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All participants have easy access to the process. Access is provided through informal forums that give everyone an opportunity to voice their concerns. All points of view should have equal opportunity to be presented, heard, and taken into account. <p>2. Fairness of facilitation (Webler <i>et al.</i>, 2001)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitator/s should run the process professionally and fairly. Facilitator/s not to favour one particular side. 	<p>5. Easy access to the process should be provided to all participants equally, for example, relevant events to be advertised widely.</p> <p>6. Selections of time and place for events should be maximise convenience.</p> <p>7. All concerns are free to be raised and to be taken into account.</p> <p>8. Process facilitator/s should have professional skills and experience, and ensure all participants feel confident that the process is run fairly and impartially.</p> <p>9. A fair and transparent process for conflict resolution should be in place.</p>

<p>3. Information exchange and learning (Moote <i>et al.</i>, 1997; Hockings and Carter, 1998)</p>	<p>1. A process open to new information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Information should be fully interchanged between authorities and participants. ▪ Local knowledge and technical information should be gathered. ▪ Constraints and limitations of each agency should be addressed. ▪ Concerns and interests of stakeholders should be discussed. 	<p>10. Genuine information exchange, including local knowledge as well as technical data, is needed.</p> <p>11. Process participants should be informed of constraints/ limitations of the process.</p>
<p>4. Continuity of the process (Moote <i>et al.</i>, 1997; Jackson, 2001:139)</p>	<p>1. Public participation to be ongoing during the process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Stakeholders should be informed and given opportunities for input from the first stage through to the final decision. 	<p>12. Public participation processes should be continually carried out, starting from initially informing people about the project; educating them; discussing ideas and solutions with them; and making the decision.</p>
<p>5. Quality of decision-making and responsible leadership (Moote <i>et al.</i>, 1997; Webler <i>et al.</i>, 2001; Lawrence <i>et al.</i>, 1997)</p>	<p>1. Decision-making authorities (Moote <i>et al.</i>, 1997)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public should gain power to influence the outcomes and decisions, ensuring their preferences are truly reflected. <p>2. Leadership of decision-makers (Webler <i>et al.</i>, 2001; Lawrence <i>et al.</i>, 1997)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Decision-makers should have skills and experience to contribute to a participatory decision making process. ▪ Leadership of decision-makers should be demonstrated in a true participatory process, as stated above in 1-4. 	<p>13. Decision-making to be shared by participants.</p> <p>14. Decision-makers need skills that can be used in conflict resolution, in contributing trust and respectfulness, and in making the appropriate decision in light of stakeholder participation.</p>

CHAPTER 6: STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter applies my criteria in order to evaluate the efficacy of the public participation process applied in the SDP. Since the thesis was to be completed before the final SDP, I am largely limited to the processes leading to a first draft version of the SDP. The draft was developed by Inspiring Place Consultants in February 2004. Nevertheless, my discussion is able to allow to some extent for the processes following the draft, since they are known from my enquiries to the Chair of the Steering Committee.

Before I begin the analysis and discussion of the SDP, outcomes of the process to date are addressed, providing necessary information for developing the argument. The Chapter Five review identified five main aspects or concerns for effective public participation. These are legitimacy of process and decision; fairness and equality of the process; information exchange and learning; continuity of the process; and quality of decision-making and responsible leadership. Each of these is applied in turn in section 6.2 below.

6.1 Summary of the Process to Date

After my collection of background information on the Myrtle Forest Picnic Area and the findings from the public consultation program were completed, the data were sent to Inspiring Place for assessment for the SDP. Inspiring Place then developed a preliminary draft of the Myrtle Forest SDP. This draft was given to the Steering Committee to comment. Four major management issues were identified in the draft (Inspiring Place, 2004). They are visitor access and circulation; public safety and amenity; visitor facilities and activities; and environmental management. Inspiring

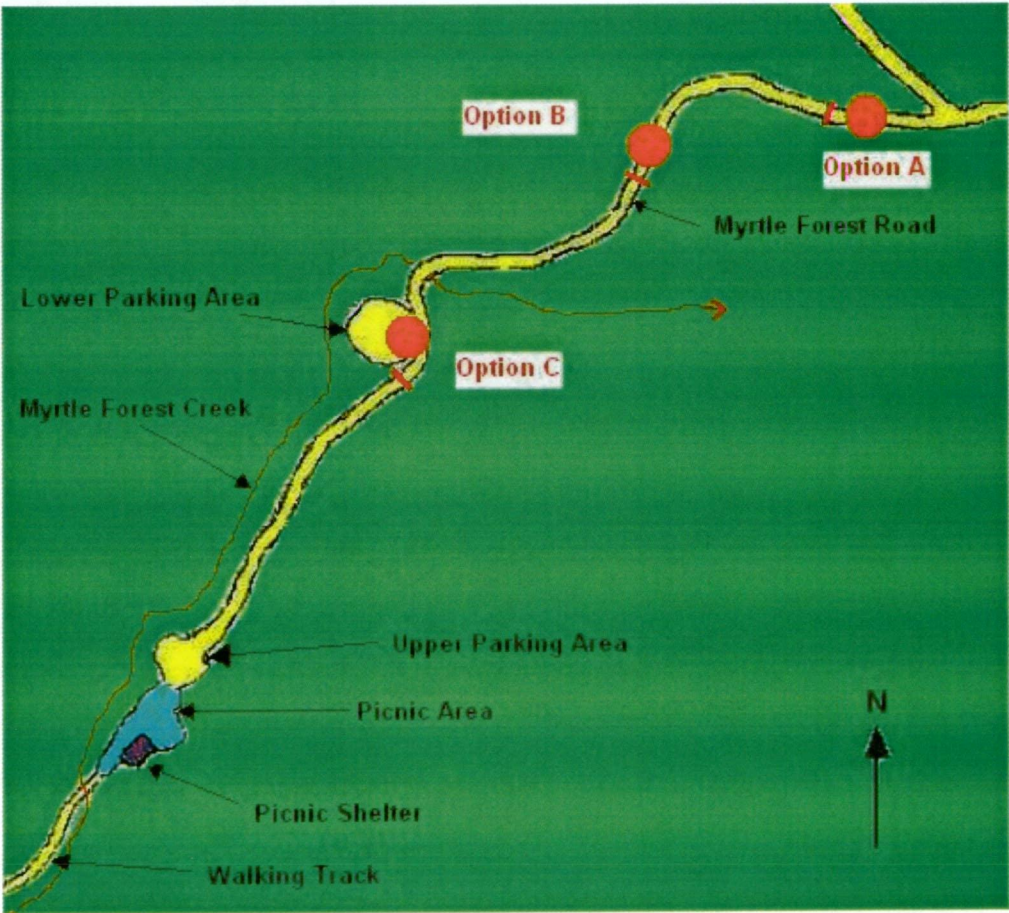
Place proposed three options for development. Common proposals to all the options were to construct a boom gate to restrict vehicle access; to make the area above the gate, including the Picnic Area, a shared-use zone for walkers, joggers, and cyclists; and to develop a 'deposit for key' system ensuring that people with mobility difficulties can open the gate and access the area by car. The major difference amongst the options is the location of the main car park (and the boom gate) and hence the distance of both from the picnic area. Each option also included upgrading the picnic shelter, provision of toilets, and upgrading the walking track to Myrtle Forest Falls.

Option A proposed the development of a new parking area, turning circle, and a boom gate approximately 100m past the junction of Myrtle Forest Road and an access road to a private property (see Figure 6.1), using part of the land offered by one of the residents on the Community Walk. From this point, it would take about fifteen minutes to walk up the road to the picnic area. Option B involves the development of a parking area, turning circle, and a boom gate, closer to the picnic area, about 200m uphill from the proposed Option A car park. Redevelopment of the existing lower car park is the main feature of Option C, also with a boom gate, thus preventing most vehicles from accessing the top car park adjacent to the Picnic Area.

The plan was circulated to all members of the Steering Committee before they met on the 5th March 2004 to discuss the draft. After the plan is revised, it will be submitted to the Wellington Park Management Trust to endorse and release for public comment. The Trust will advertise the availability of the draft in *The Mercury* (Hobart's daily newspaper), the local *Glenorchy Gazette*, and the website of Wellington Park Management Trust at <www.wellingtonpark.tas.gov.au> to call for comment. The draft will be available at the Glenorchy City Council and on the Trust's website. Copies are also to be forwarded to Collinsvale Precinct Community. The public will be invited to make submissions at Glenorchy City Council or through the Trust's website within 21 days. Any comments received will be summarised and scrutinised. The plan may need to be revised in the light of comments. Decisions to include comments or further information in the plan are (hopefully) to be by

consensus in the Steering Committee. After the Steering Committee reviews and presumably approves the revised draft plan, it will be submitted to the Trust for final endorsement. However, if the Steering Committee decides that major changes should be made to the plan, Inspiring Place will be responsible for those. The Trust decisions are by consensus, but the majority rules if consensus cannot be achieved. The Steering Committee will provide feedback for those who commented where their comments have been included or on why their comments were not included in the final plan.

Figure 6.1: Diagram (not to scale) showing the location of the three options presented in the draft SDP



6.2 Applying the Criteria to the SDP

6.2.1 Legitimacy of Process and Decisions

6.2.1.1 Consensus-based Decisions

“Many possible ideas for the conduct of the process and how its outcomes will be generated should be discussed, and if differences remain, consensus should be sought.” (Criterion 1)

The literature consulted suggested that legitimacy of process and decisions can be undertaken based on consensual decision-making, transparency of the process and evidence-based decisions. Consensual decision-making refers to circumstances in which many possible ideas for the conduct of the process and how its outcomes will be generated can be discussed amongst participants. The SDP process somewhat failed to achieve this due to the lack of public contributions. The work program for the SDP, developed by Inspiring Place Consultants, did not include the wider community in its development. Only the Steering Committee, which was comprised of two local residents and the three relevant agency representatives, gained an opportunity to comment on and discuss the SDP work schedule. This discussion took place in early August 2003 when the Steering Committee site visitation was arranged and only one of the two local residents was present on the day. A common question that emerges in the literature I consulted is the degree of public comment on the work program and whether the wider community have gained more opportunity to contribute (Cuthbertson, 1983:106).

Generally, there is no doubt that the Steering Committee contributed valuable assistance in developing the SDP work program, with its range of methods for data gathering. In my view, however, the efficacy of the process for setting the work program could have been improved if the public had the opportunity to make comments and suggestions. An open discussion can enhance process legitimacy because participants are not forced to agree on the predefined work program. Instead, they gain an opportunity to contribute to work program considerations. My argument

is supported by Webler *et al.* (2001:440) who claimed that the “public should be involved in deciding what technical information should be gathered and how it should be gathered”. Therefore, it could be suggested, for example, that the predefined work program could have been displayed at the Collinsvale shop and public comment invited, though this could have increased the number of stages in the consultant’s brief and demanded a higher budget. Local residents should be encouraged to suggest alternatives on what information should be gathered, and what methods can be employed (Cuthbertson, 1983:106).

6.2.1.2 Transparency

“A detailed working process needs to be publicly available, stating clearly the roles of stakeholders and the decision-maker; how public input is to be incorporated; and how the decision is to be made.” (Criterion 2)

It appeared that the SDP process failed to achieve transparency because its work plan and work processes were short on information available publicly. This work program (as in Appendix A) contained some components that can ensure transparency; for example, it stated clearly the list of works that needed to be undertaken in chronological order and where responsibility lay to complete the various stages. The work program also addressed explicitly at what stages and by what methods the public could make inputs to the SDP. However, the work plan did not identify clearly the agency that is responsible for making decisions; how the decision would be made; and how public inputs would be weighted and incorporated in the decisions. The lack of clear statements on these aspects lessened the transparency of the process, and as a consequence, lessened its legitimacy.

The SDP process looked in some respects like the “consultation” stage in Arnstein’s (1969) ladder of participation. The public are free to express their concerns and preferences, while degrees of tokenism are apparent because there is no guarantee that their concerns and interests will be taken into account. To minimise the degree of tokenism and improve the transparency of the SDP process, Steelman and Ascher (1997:75) suggested that prescriptions on how public input would be weighted and

measured and used to formulate the decision are needed. The SDP work plan could also have covered explicitly the agency responsible for decision-making, methods to be used in the decision-making process (voting and/or consensus), and how the public's opinions would be used to influence the decision. In my view, the work plan could have been publicly available, perhaps again at the Collinsvale shop, to ensure that people were aware of what the process was at all times.

6.2.1.3 Evidence-based Decisions

"Decisions and recommendations should be made based on sound evidence."
(Criterion 3)

The SDP process achieved relative legitimacy because most decisions were made based on sound evidence. The discussion in the Community Walk process, for example, contributed significantly to the recommendations made in the draft plan, and the concerns and interests of questionnaire participants were fairly well addressed overall, though there were some exceptions.

Three options were suggested in the plan. Option A was based on an idea suggested by residents during the Community Walk, but which also responded to responses that were very clearly expressed in the questionnaire. Some of the locals present on the Walk suggested restricting vehicular access to the picnic area by constructing a locked boom gate immediately beyond what was to be the proposed arrival and turning area for Option A (Inspiring Place, 2004:27). The main difference between options was the location of the boom gate and parking area. These three alternatives were aimed at resolving issues that were identified in the questionnaire. These were anti-social behaviours such as vandalism and dangerous driving, fern theft, rubbish dumping, security of site users and their property, and inadequate car parking. Using a boom gate was judged to reduce vandalism because people are unlikely to walk quite a distance to the site and destroy facilities (Inspiring Place, 2004:24). This also applies to fern thieves and rubbish dumping. Unlike the current situation which allows for unsafe driving, restriction of vehicular access can ensure pedestrian safety because only walkers, joggers, and cyclists are able to access the area beyond the

gate. Vehicles for people with mobility difficulty are permitted access by using a key which can be collected from a designated person/place. In addition, the distance from the boom gate to the current picnic area could provide pleasant walking experiences due to natural features along the way, whereas constructing a new walking track (short circuit) was judged physically and financially impractical.

The draft plan addressed other issues identified in my survey. These include the lack of visitor facilities such as toilets and interpretation signage; poor condition of some existing facilities such as the picnic shelter and the long-distance walking track; management issues such as the protection of native species; and the desire for other visitor facilities such as a viewing platform on the walking track. For example, an environment-friendly toilet, which was identified as the most needed facility (90%), is proposed in the draft plan with location and management provisions to minimise impact on Myrtle Forest Creek and the threatened species Curly Sedge (Inspiring Place, 2004:30). The toilets are recommended to be located on the edge of the fire trail near the upper parking area.

Although most concerns and preferences indicated by participants are addressed in the draft plan, there are some aspects associated with the shortage of information that weakened the efficacy of the decision-making process as evidence-based. These are barbecue facilities and capacity of the site. The idea of vehicle restrictions, which was suggested by only a small group of people, is important in the draft plan, while barbecue facilities, which received considerable support from the questionnaire participants, are not taken into account on-site, though a solution elsewhere is suggested. More than 70% of questionnaire respondents wanted a barbecue facility at the site, but this was not incorporated into the draft plan. The consultant from Inspiring Place explained that the whole idea of having barbecue facilities had been changed because the surveyed participants did not know that the road was to be blocked when answering the questionnaire. Questionnaire respondents thought that they would be able to continue to drive up to the current upper car park. The consultants noted that if the road is to be blocked, people may not want to carry food and walk for a distance. Thus, barbecue facilities were not included in the plan, but it

was recommended that they could be installed at the Collinsvale community park instead, which is about 10 minutes away by car.

Another aspect of lack of evidentiary support and necessary data emerged in the last Steering Committee meeting when one member remarked that the draft plan failed to address carrying capacity, which was one of the requirements of the project brief. Carrying capacity can assist significantly in the estimation of the number of visitors able to be at the site at a time without having adverse impacts of a range of types. Without this data, judgements of number of vehicles and site users that should be allowed at the site and the scale of development are difficult. It appeared that the number of vehicles that parking areas at each site (Options A, B, and C) can support were identified without considering the carrying capacity of Myrtle Forest, though presumably it was assumed from indications of present visitation and the original aim for the site in the SDP brief, that development as a low key recreational node would be maintained.

“Information that is to be used as basis for any decision-making and recommendations should be reviewed for its accuracy and evaluated consistently.”
(Criterion 4)

Webler *et al.* (2001:441) noted that peer review to ensure accuracy of information should be undertaken. Accuracy of data is important because the data can foster a good decision. The SDP process was carried out relatively well because much of the data employed, that is, data I provided, were reviewed at least by two people: my supervisor and John Hepper from Inspiring Place. My supervisor reviewed the findings of the survey when the data was processed and summarised. A summary of the findings was forwarded to the consultant for further scrutiny before being applied in the SDP. All members of the Steering Committee were also given a summary of the survey findings and one member was given a full report of the survey findings. Background information on the site (my baseline site data, Chapter Three) was collected and reviewed by comparing data from different sources, such as a range of written sources, published and not published, maps, and also by means of personal

communications with a few local residents who know the site very well. The baseline data account was also reviewed by my supervisor and John Hepper.

It appeared that the process of ensuring accuracy in the data was well carried out in view of time constraints. The process, however, could have been improved if further data review by the Steering Committee had been undertaken. For example, the report and summary of questionnaire findings and baseline data could have been forwarded to every member in the Steering Committee before they were applied in the SDP.

6.2.2 Fairness and Equality in the Process

6.2.2.1 Access to the Process

“Easy access to the process should be provided to all participants equally, for example, events to be advertised widely.” (Criterion 5)

“Selections of time and place for events should maximise convenience.” (Criterion 6)

Public access to the process is one of the factors that can promote fairness and equity. The SDP process, in my view, provided relatively easy access for the public because the views of all interested individuals and stakeholders were incorporated in the decisions; several methods were employed to gather public concerns and interests; and the arrangement of events was made to be convenient for the local community. However, this criterion assumes that all participants have been clearly identified, i.e., that all stakeholders are known and have easy access. In the SDP process, there is no doubt that possible stakeholders from the wider Hobart region were underrepresented.

In the SDP process, all interested agencies and local individuals were consulted to fulfil the requirement stated in the Project Brief. These were representatives from PWS, GCC, and the Trust; the Collinsvale/Glenlusk Precinct Committee and the local community, but also some members of the wider public who were site users,

and members of some walking clubs. Opinions were gathered by using both formal and informal approaches. Examples of the former were the questionnaire, a meeting with the Collinsvale/Glenlusk Precinct Committee, and Steering Committee meetings which included representatives from the Collinsvale/Glenlusk Precinct. Less formal means were the on-site meetings, including the Steering Committee and the Community Walk. Worboys *et al.* (2001:119) claimed that using formal and informal approaches is superior because it can foster the disclosure of participants' concerns and preferences, provide maximum opportunity for dealing with issues, and predict or avoid conflict.

The survey and the Community Walk are good examples of easy access to the process. Public participation is reflected through the survey which achieved a 50% response rate. Local residents and site users from elsewhere were represented evenly in the survey. The Collinsvale and nearby communities were provided maximum opportunity to fill out the questionnaire by collecting it either from the Collinsvale shop (during a two month period), or with a letter to parents from the Collinsvale Primary School. Posters inviting people to take and complete the questionnaires were posted in the Collinsvale shop window. The other opportunity, of course, was during the on-site survey at the picnic area, which was not advertised, however. Residents had plenty of time to fill the questionnaires out on-site. Participants from other locations were offered a stamped envelope to send the completed questionnaire back, if they did not want to complete the questionnaire at the site. Questionnaire responses from walking club members came back via the reply paid addressed envelopes provided. Though the overall response rate was very good, it would have been better if the on-site survey period could have been expanded to weekdays as well because there may have been more chance to get ideas from other user groups, for example, students on school field trips. However, considering the time constraints of the study, it was impossible to do so. Ideally, surveys would be done at other times during the year as well, aiming to canvass more visitors from elsewhere.

Local residents were also given easy access to the Community Walk because the time was chosen by the community representatives. The date and time were selected

at the Collinsvale Precinct meeting (9th December 2003) for the 6th January 2004. This does not necessarily mean, however, that it was convenient for others, especially as January is the summer holiday period for many families. Details of the Community Walk were posted on the front window of the Collinsvale shop to invite the public to take part. Information was posted for three weeks from the 17th December 2003 to the 6th January 2004, admittedly over the Christmas period which is very busy and means people may be focused on other matters.

As stated in Chapter Four, nine local residents came to the Community Walk. However, Bradshaw and Stratford (2000:38) and Webler *et al.* (2001:443) claimed that it is not the number of people present that is important, but the quality of the interaction for those that do participate. In my view, the discussion in the Community Walk was effective two-way communication and the small group discussion encouraged participants to express their views, concerns, and preferences. Moreover, because the participants were experienced and knowledgeable about their concerns and preferences, the discussion in the Community Walk contributed a great deal in getting detailed ideas, comments, and alternatives for the SDP, in line with discussions by Webler *et al.* (2001:443) about participant interactions. Options for the SDP emerged from this interactive discussion when some of the participants offered using their own land as a car parking entry to the picnic area. Tradeoffs are required to make a community work (Fulton, 1996:6).

"All concerns are free to be raised and to be taken into account." (Criterion 7)

The SDP process can be seen to have failed to meet this criterion because the public had restricted access to important information. Reducing vehicular access was one example that limited public inputs because the idea was not promoted for wider community discussion. This idea was firmed up as a very likely option by a small group of people and the project team on the Community Walk, even though the concept of closing part of the access road had been discussed earlier at the August on-site Steering Committee meeting. It could be that local people knew about this

kind of possibility from members of the Steering Committee, but no processes were set up in the community consultation program to follow this matter up.

Options in the draft plan were developed without any attempts for further contribution from other locals. In my view, if people were informed about the idea of vehicular access restriction before options in the draft plan were developed, they could have expressed possible concerns and provided, perhaps, other alternatives for the SDP. It would have been optimal if the locals had been given more information about the issue and discussion arranged, in light of the idea of Moote *et al.* (1997:879) that everyone should be given equal opportunity to voice their interests.

6.2.2.2 Fairness of facilitation

“Process facilitator/s should have professional skills and experience, and ensure all participants feel confident that the process is run fairly and impartially.” (Criterion 8)

Fairness of facilitation is an important factor (Webler *et al.*, 2001:443) that should be addressed in order to promote fairness and equality in the SDP process. In my view, the facilitator from Inspiring Place Consultants showed professional experience and skills in running the SDP process without bias. From my participation in the Community Walk and the meeting with the Collinsvale/Glenlusk Precinct Committee, I think that these two events are good examples because the discussions were undertaken without favouring any particular individuals or groups. All participants were given opportunity to talk on any issues freely (Webler *et al.*, 2001:443; Moote *et al.*, 1997:879). After the consultant addressed issues and concerns identified by the study team at both events, all participants were encouraged to comment, add, and give more details on those issues that needed taking into account. The Community Walk was open to everyone from any interest group, in accord with recommendations for open processes by Webler *et al.* (2001:441).

“A fair and transparent process for conflict resolution should be in place.” (Criterion 9)

Disagreement rarely occurred in the SDP process. The only disagreement occurred in the meeting with the Collinsvale Precinct Committee. In this meeting, a participant aggressively expressed his view as opposed to any improvements at Myrtle Forest Picnic Area. Arguments developed between the gentleman and the consultant which were not resolved at the meeting. The consultant later phoned in an attempt to resolve the apparent conflict. A message and the consultant's phone number were left, but the person never contacted the consultant. In my view, the consultant's effort was appropriate, because though this gentleman appeared to be the only one who opposed the fundamental basis of the SDP, Webler *et al.* (2001:445) suggested that reaching out to different groups and individuals is one of the essential features of a good process. Fulton (1996:6) also noted that ‘citizens who were initially anti-development demanded to be included in the planning process in a meaningful way’. The consultant's action to resolve conflict is fairly meaningful given the time-constrained situation of the SDP process.

6.2.3 Information Exchange and Learning

6.2.3.1 Open Process to New Information

“Genuine information exchange, including local knowledge as well as technical data is needed.” (Criterion 10)

Information exchange and learning are factors that can contribute to successful public participation. The SDP process achieved these because significant public input was obtained from employing various methods, including the questionnaire, discussions on the Community Walk, the Collinsvale Precinct Committee meeting, and by appointing local representatives to the Steering Committee.

Information about Myrtle Forest was gathered with assistance of the Steering Committee members. The representatives from PWS, GCC, the Trust and the

Collinsvale/Glenlusk Precinct Committee provided me with a number of relevant plans of the Wellington Park, useful literature and reports on site values, uses, historical context and natural features of the place to include in my baseline data report. This report was later forwarded to John Hepper to be applied in the SDP considerations. Compared with other popular places on the Wellington Range, Myrtle Forest is a small area and not many studies have been conducted at the site. Therefore, local knowledge was very important and valuable in information gathering, because local residents provided data that had not been collected officially. These data were used in the implications for future development of the site. The questionnaire also assisted in collecting data on both aspirations for future development and the values that people placed on Myrtle Forest Picnic Area. To me, the SDP process was conducted well with respect to information exchange and learning.

However, the question about the information offered on proposals for vehicular access restriction remains. I thought that the SDP process lacked an important element of genuine information exchange and learning on this point. The wider community had restricted opportunity to make inputs to this idea.

In the final Steering Committee meeting to consider the draft SDP, one member suggested the need to canvass a small number of residents whose property is located near the proposed car parking for Option A to discuss potential impacts. This matter, which is also one relevant to information exchange, is discussed below in the context of conflict resolution (6.2.5.2).

“Process participants should be informed of constraints and limitations of the process.” (Criterion 11)

The SDP program failed to meet this criterion because participants were not informed about the finances governing the process. Local residents may have heard about the SDP budget from members of the local representatives on the Steering Committee. However, the locals were not told the exact amount of the budget, or

details of funds available for implementation of the SDP. In the last Steering Committee meeting on the 5th March 2004, the consultant did not submit the indicative cost descriptions to the Steering Committee: calculations had not been done due to time limitations. The Committee then decided that indicative cost descriptions were not necessary for public comment. I think that the SDP financial plan should be displayed for public comment, in light of the argument by Webler *et al.* (2001:441) that all information should be disclosed to ensure process transparency. If people are informed about the budget, they can be helped in constructing productive and practical inputs to the draft plan.

In addition, the public had not been informed about the impracticality of constructing a short walking track. More than 70% of questionnaire responses asked for addition of a short walking track. After inspecting the site, the study team concluded that the development of the short walking track was not feasible due to its geographical difficulty and the probability of very high costs and environmental damage. This message, however, was conveyed to the Collinsvale/Glenlusk Precinct Committee meeting by John Hepper on 9th December 2003.

6.2.4 Continuity of the Process

6.2.4.1 Public Participation to be Ongoing during the Process

“Public participation processes should be continually carried out, starting from initially informing people about the project; educating them; discussing ideas and solutions with them; and making the decision.” (Criterion 12)

The SDP process achieved ongoing public participation fairly well. It has been almost two years from May 2002 to March 2004 during which the Collinsvale local community has been involved in this project, mostly through the representative positions on the Steering Committee.

Continuity of public participation can be seen chronologically from the first meeting in May 2002 when all involved (PWS, GCC, the Trust, and the Collinsvale/Glenlusk Precinct Committee) agreed on the necessity for a SDP before the formation of the Steering Committee, and the development of the SDP Project Brief from November 2002 to February 2003. My baseline data search from July to September 2003 provided an opportunity for me to collect the information from both the literature and personal communications with many locals. Site users, including community members, were consulted on levels of use and aspirations for the site through November 2003 to January 2004 before production of the draft SDP in March 2004.

It should also be noted that some of the SDP consultation processes relied mostly on two of the local residents who were members of the Steering Committee. The two represented the Collinsvale/Glenlusk Precinct Committee. A question that emerges at this point is about the connection between these representatives and the wider local community. The connection can be expressed in terms of how much information generated in the Steering Committee meeting is transferred to the wider local residents, and how much information is passed from local residents to the Precinct Committee and to the Steering Committee. Such connections can ensure that participants are aware of the process and can enter the process at all times.

Based on a conversation with one of the local representatives, I think that the wider community had a fair chance to involve themselves in the process continuously. This is because the discussions and results from the Steering Committee were forwarded to local residents through monthly meetings of the Collinsvale/Glenlusk Precinct Committee and newsletters. The newsletter, the *Collinsvale Crier*, is released to every household in Collinsvale and Glenlusk once per two months, and *Glenorchy Gazette* is released every month. Local residents, in return, could raise their concerns on the SDP process through the forum provided in the Collinsvale/Glenlusk Precinct meeting. This Committee provides a forum for everyone in the community to raise topics for discussion. These examples show the continuity of the public participation process in the SDP.

6.2.5 Quality of Decision-making and Responsible Leadership

6.2.5.1 Sharing Decision-making

“Decision-making needs to be shared by participants.” (Criterion 13)

Although decision-making power was given to representatives of local residents to some extent, the SDP process, however, failed to meet this criterion.

In ideal public participatory planning, processes not only allow the public to contribute to and comment on the proposals, but should allow them to make the decisions (Moote *et al.*, 1997:880). This idea is reflected in the top three rungs of Arnstein’s ladder of participation: the public has a real opportunity to decide the outcomes. In the SDP process, the local community gained power to influence the outcomes and decisions through their community representatives, but as explained previously, they did not have the opportunity to make inputs on some fairly significant issues, namely, the barbecues and proposed access restrictions. Preferably, I think that the processes would have been more effective if everyone had the power to represent their own interests and ideas. However, considering time and financial constraints, having representatives on the Committee was appropriate for a project of this kind, but the ability of local representatives to influence the outcomes and the decision needs some discussion.

Having two voices out of five on the Steering Committee ensured that the local community exercised some power in the decision-making process. The locals had more seats on the Committee than any other agency with one representative from each: PWS, GCC, and the Trust. However, two places for the local representatives are less than the other three if an issue came to the vote and the agencies voted together. That is, minority seats of the locals in the Committee can be easily outvoted by others. This scenario is like the idea of “placation” in Arnstein’s (1969:80) ladder of participation. Participants are selected to sit on a committee, while outnumbered. To me, gaining two out of five seats on the Committee are inadequate because if disagreements emerged, the two locals are not able to ensure their interests.

6.2.5.2 Leadership of Decision-makers

“Decision-makers need skills that can be used in conflict resolution, in contributing trust and respectfulness, and in making the appropriate decision in light of stakeholder participation.” (Criterion 14)

There is no doubt that the decision-making body had skills and experience in contributing to a participatory process and outcome; these skills are reflected in two examples.

First, the Committee took appropriate action in resolving conflict associated with Option A. The Committee decided to accept the three Options proposed in the draft plan, and as John Hepper suggested, Option A was preferred. In order to select Option A, possible issues for local residents will need resolving. In the last Steering Committee meeting on the 5th March 2004, the Committee raised the issue that people residing near the proposed parking area for Option A might be confronted with excess noise from vehicles and the possibility of nuisance if the new parking area become a new gathering spot for those showing anti-social behaviour. After discussion, it was decided that the PWS representative will try to discuss the matter with the family living closest, while the two local representatives will see other residents of Myrtle Forest Road. The outcomes of these discussions, especially with the nearest family, will decide whether Option A is to remain in the plan or be removed. This example shows that the Committee took appropriate steps to resolve potential conflicts.

Second, the next step in the decision-making process that the Committee intends to undertake reflects its skills and experience in public participatory planning, especially in contributing trust and respectfulness. After the public comment period, the Committee plans to provide feedback to all the people who make submissions on the draft SDP. The explanations will ensure that people understand the reasons behind the Committee's decisions. The conflicts should be resolved or, at least, lessened, in light of the idea of Webler *et al.* (2001:444) that if the public are

informed, they tend to accept the outcomes. The measures discussed promote trust and respectfulness all round.

6.3 Conclusion

In this chapter, analysis of the SDP process was undertaken by employing the criteria I developed to evaluate the efficacy of the public participation process. Overall, I found that the SDP process met, to some extent, most of the criteria for success, though the failure to meet some criteria is noticeable.

In general, the SDP process was open to public participation by allowing all interested individuals and stakeholders to join important parts of process. People were also provided with various ways to access the process and at their own convenience. Facilitation of three events, the Community Walk, the meeting with Collinsvale/Glenlusk Precinct Committee, and meetings with the Steering Committee, was fair, impartial, and professional because the facilitator, John Hepper, was skilful and experienced.

Information exchange and learning were undertaken through both formal and informal approaches: I believe that using both approaches helped gain appropriate and adequate information in the case of technical data and local knowledge. Most of the recommendations in the draft plan were also made based on data from the questionnaire, the Community Walk, and public inputs from other means. The public were allowed to participate in the SDP process continuously throughout the process, with one major exception. The exception was that the public had some influence on final decisions only through two representatives on the Steering Committee, where the decisions are normally made based on consensus, but with majority rule in the case of disagreement.

Weaknesses in the SDP process stemmed largely from the failure to meet several criteria. The SDP process critically failed to address process legitimacy because public inputs were insufficiently incorporated in developing the work plan. In addition, the program did not specify the process for decision-making, who was to decide, and the weight to be given to public input. The details of the full process were not publicly available.

Moreover, legitimacy of the process was lessened because some recommendations in the draft plan were made without evidentiary support, in particular the lack of data on carrying capacity of the site. The SDP process was undertaken well in incorporating data from many sources; however, data were not always genuinely exchanged and transferred amongst participants, as in the case of reducing vehicular access to the site. Local residents had limited opportunities to contribute, thus limiting the fairness of the process. Participants had very limited knowledge of the financial constraints upon the SDP process, and were not informed of expenditure associated with the three options in the draft SDP.

The failure to satisfy these criteria reduces the quality of the decision-making. Along with comments on the thesis research and my experience as a whole, specific lessons for processes like the SDP exercise for Myrtle Forest are given in the next and final chapter.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSIONS

This chapter first presents a short summary of my overall research program. Lessons about the conduct of the research are then identified and discussed, emphasising my two roles of participant researcher and observer researcher. Limitations are also covered. Comments are made on the literature which the evaluative criteria for success were drawn from, focussing on its advantages and weaknesses in the SDP situation. Finally, this chapter provides lessons from my study for the application of public participatory measures to natural area management planning exercises of a similar scale to that of the SDP.

7.1 Overall Summary of My Research

As part of becoming involved in developing the SDP, I undertook two roles in conducting my research: participant as field researcher, and observer as researcher. As field researcher, I have completed my responsibilities in reporting on the baseline biophysical and cultural data on Myrtle Forest and its surroundings (Chapter 3), and other data on use and aspirations for future development of the site from visitors and others (Chapter 4). The survey (by questionnaire) and the interviews with key informants were the means used. The data were forwarded to John Hepper, the Inspiring Place consultant, to apply in the formulation of the SDP. I was also one of the study team members who actively participated in all the stakeholder consultation processes (Phase 3) of the Inspiring Place Work Program Stage I, as well as attending the Steering Committee meetings, once Stage I was initiated, and an on-site team meeting. In these meetings I had the opportunity to discuss and to be questioned on my progress.

As observer researcher, I undertook the task of evaluating the entire community consultative program, consisting of my own survey and interviews, the Community

Walk, and the meeting with the Collinsvale/Glenlusk Precinct Committee. I also treated the meetings with the Steering Committee and the study team meeting as part of the consultative process for my purposes. I observed and took detailed notes on all the events. In order to critically analyse and judge the process, I conducted my review of selected literature on public participatory planning which enabled me to develop the evaluative criteria (Chapter 5). After applying the criteria, the analysis revealed that the decision-making process of the SDP was effective to some extent because it met some of the criteria, but failed to meet others (Chapter 6).

7.2 Lessons from the Conduct of the Research

Having conducted the research by undertaking the role of a participant in the SDP process and at the same time being a researcher in my own right and an evaluative observer of that process, I found useful lessons from my reflections on the process. I found that this role is possibly optimal for a researcher because it enabled me not only to gain experience and contribute, but also to capture information from real life situations in my case study. I acknowledge that conducting research by analysing information from primary sources such as minutes of meetings is possible and applicable. However, in the case of the SDP process, observing and collecting data from actual circumstances allowed me to gain more data because data from other sources may not have contained information necessary in my analysis. For example, minutes of the meeting with the Collinsvale/Glenlusk Precinct Committee did not refer to the interactions amongst participants after the consultant explained his ideas on issues to be addressed in the SDP (Taylor, 2003). I found from my observations at the meeting that participants have positive ideas on the issues. Some participants gave details of the issues from their own experience and some suggested new aspects that should be considered.

Another example emerges from the last Steering Committee meeting, which was called to comment on the draft SDP. The minutes of meeting were not recorded, a member of the Steering Committee said (Bidwell, M. pers. comm., 30 Mar.). This

was because the main aim of that meeting was to comment on the draft SDP and what changes are to be made, and because John Hepper would record all the details discussed on behalf of Inspiring Place. By attending the meeting, however, I saw how the local representatives actually gained power to influence the draft SDP, because their comments and recommendations were agreed upon by the meeting and accepted as matters for revision of the SDP.

Taking the role of observer in all phases of the SDP process up to presentation of the draft (but excluding the draft formulation by Inspiring Place) assisted me in critical analysis. Undertaking both my roles enabled ^{me} to obtain more understanding of the entire process. Thus, the two roles allow ^{me} to suggest that this technique is well worth consideration for research of this kind.

7.3 Comment on the Literature

Although many theorists agreed that people have different views about good public participation processes (Webler *et al.* 2001:448), some of the literature on public participatory planning provided constructive ideas that can be used as a basis to examine the efficacy of public participation. I extracted five aspects that need to be considered and these aspects enabled me to develop a set of criteria to be used in the process assessment. Without guidance from the literature, it would have been very difficult or impossible for me to conduct this research. There is no doubt that the criteria considerably benefited me in evaluating the efficacy of the SDP process.

However, I had some difficulties in applying criteria to the SDP process. This is, perhaps, because my criteria were generated from literature that may have been developed in the context of large projects with substantial money support and of longer duration. The SDP process was minimal in terms of the scale of the development envisaged at Myrtle Forest, financial support and process duration. Therefore, it is necessary to be flexible in applying the criteria because it is difficult

in the real world to comply with all the suggestions in the literature. The SDP process, in view of the tight budget, could not be expected to meet all criteria fully.

Reducing vehicular access to the picnic area at Myrtle Forest, which was part of all three options in the SDP, is one example of the failure of information exchange and learning affected by time and cost constraints. The idea of reducing access was brought firmly into the discussion only at the Community Walk, which was very late in the process. It was not possible to promote this aspect for wider community discussion, considering time and the financial and human resources allocated for the SDP, even though the literature noted that genuine public participation should involve full and free interchange of information between the public and relevant authorities.

Another example comes from the idea of shared decision-making. Ideally, the public should be given an opportunity to participate fully in making a decision, not only be given power to comment. In the SDP process, community members were given an opportunity to make an input to the SDP via processes such as my questionnaire and other means, and will be able to comment on the draft plan. They did not have actual power to generate options they desired, or to accept the options presented in the draft SDP except through the two Precinct Committee representatives who sit on the Steering Committee.

When comparing the SDP process and ideas in Arnstein's (1969) ladder of participation, I found that the SDP stakeholder consultation program and the presence of local representatives on the Steering Committee fitted descriptions of "consultation" and "placation". In light of Arnstein's view, the SDP consultation program presents as tokenism because it only allowed the public to hear, to have voice, and to advise; but there was no assurance that their inputs were to be taken into account. The desire for on-site barbecue facilities is an example where public preferences were not met. The SDP process looks like placation, because local representatives were selected to sit on the Steering Committee apparently to make a shared decision. However, they could have been outvoted.

Genuine public participation seems impractical in the SDP process for the reasons cited. To me, however, the SDP was undertaken fairly well in the situation where time and money were limited. Using representatives to help make the decision was more practical and convenient, but still kept a wider community in the process.

Even though the criteria are impractical in some respects, the literature provides a benchmark to strive for. Specific lessons I have been able to derive from my research for the conduct of such site development plans in general are given in 7.5 below.

7.4 Limitations of the Research

The short time to conduct my research (July 2003 to March 2004) restricted me in two ways: lack of exploration of a more complete method of evaluating the efficacy of the SDP process, and a more thorough, comprehensive literature review which may have led to improvement in the criteria that I developed.

My first problem emerged from a discussion with one of my professors on how to effectively and critically evaluate the efficacy of the SDP process. He suggested conducting a study with the participants after the SDP plan was developed, aiming to see whether those involved in the SDP process were happy with the stakeholder consultation program. Moote *et al.* (1997) employed this technique in studying the efficacy of a public participation program in public land planning. However, I was not able to include this suggestion in my research. I realised that if I had been able to incorporate his idea into my thesis, the work would be more complete, because many ideas on the consultation program could have been reflected through this means. Ideas could have included levels of public satisfaction with the SDP process, and suggestions on what effective public participation could look like, for example, within budget constraints. By incorporating such data, I would have been able to analyse the process more critically and fully.

My second problem related to time and sequencing of work. When I became involved in the SDP process, I was assigned to review literature on site values and uses, as well as to work on the survey. The consultant needed the information early to apply them in the draft plan. I, therefore, spent time in the early stages to report on these two matters, and as a result, the literature review on participatory planning was undertaken at a later stage. The review of participatory planning may have been more thorough and comprehensive if I had been able to begin it earlier. I may have developed other, better evaluative criteria for success, or framed them in a different way.

This latter limitation taught me a lesson in conducting research when the researcher has to be involved with other people's work programs. My experience with the SDP suggests that researchers should be aware that their choices to design their own research may be narrowed. For instance, researchers may have limited choices to select methods for data collection they think are the best practice because they may have to follow the predefined schedule. Moreover, they may be restricted in setting up their program in an order that is the most logical and appropriate for their research. Nevertheless, for other reasons I gave above, I can still recommend the mode of research I was able to undertake.

7.5 Lessons from the Myrtle Forest Picnic Area SDP Process

Examining the way in which the SDP process either failed to meet or satisfied the criteria for effective public participatory processes provides lessons that can be applied to similar kinds of projects.

1. Any information that might be important for generating options which has been discussed by the consultant or other people should be incorporated into the means of data gathering as early as possible. For example, the idea of vehicular access restriction to the Myrtle Forest Picnic Area could have been

addressed in the questionnaire, since this topic had been first suggested by one participant during the on-site Steering Committee meeting early in the process (in August, 2003). Though the consultant, my supervisor, and I reviewed the questionnaire before it was finalised, the issue of establishing a boom gate was left out. Therefore, in order to provide maximum opportunity for incorporating all aspects for public comment, a steering committee also could have an opportunity to review the questionnaire and discuss any missing ideas that should be in place. This can be achieved by forwarding a copy of the questionnaire to all steering committee members before a meeting to include discussion of the matter.

2. Participants should be informed and educated on any topics that may have impacts on them. For example, in my case study, local residents, especially of Myrtle Forest Road, should have been told about the idea of reducing vehicular access because these people are the most likely to be affected detrimentally. Although some residents may have known about the concept earlier, and later when it became a stronger possibility on the Community Walk, it is doubtful whether the majority of the locals knew, and were certainly not given opportunities to comment on this issue. In particular, the residents residing adjacent to the parking area that Option A recommended in the draft plan were not informed before Option A was included. Therefore, all such projects could have a small contingency budget to cover additional processes and time if something unforeseen occurs.
3. Work programs should address all necessary information such as roles and responsibilities of each agency, the agency responsible for decision-making, criteria used to weight public inputs, and the process of how the decision is to be made; and it should be available to the public. The SDP work program failed to identify the details necessary to ensure transparency of the process as addressed previously. Therefore, a steering committee, which is often the responsible agency for decision-making, could initiate a discussion on all these process. This information should be forwarded to the consultant to be

included in the work program, a first step towards ensuring that the process is transparent. The next step in achieving transparency is covered in 4 below.

4. The work program needs to be publicly available, and the public should have an opportunity to discuss and modify the program. To ensure transparency of the process, a copy of the work program should be displayed in a prominent public place. The public should be invited to make comments on the work program, ensuring that they can have their say. It would be practical if local residents forwarded their comments on to their representatives who sit on a steering committee. This would be a realistic way of dealing with time and financial limitations.
5. Information on the cost of implementation of outcomes from a plan needs to be presented to the public to ensure transparency of the process. Discussion in the last Steering Committee meeting on the Myrtle Forest SDP on the 5th March 2004 concluded that publicising the expenditure for implementing the proposal was not necessary. I think that costs should be shown, so that the public can make well-informed contributions and comments on the draft plan.
6. Recommendations for plans and consequent decisions should be made with evidentiary support. The carrying capacity of the site, as noted earlier, was not addressed in the draft Myrtle Forest SDP even though it was one of the Project Brief requirements. Therefore, to maximise the opportunity to include all necessary evidence to support decision-making, a copy of all data on which a plan is to be based should be forwarded to all members of a steering committee. Review of data by a wider group of people can assist not only in checking for omitted information, but also in examining for the accuracy of the data.
7. Decision-making power is best shared by participants and distributed fairly and impartially amongst participants. Because availabilities of time and

budget were restricted, it was impossible for every participant to share decisions on the Myrtle Forest SDP. Local representatives were justified as practical in this circumstance. To me, however, the proportion of the locals on the Steering Committee was not adequate because they were outnumbered. I think that at least half of the seats on steering committees should be given to community stakeholders.

8. The last lesson I gained from my experience with the SDP is a question about democracy. It is known that the Wellington Range has been a special and important place for Hobartians for a very long time. Myrtle Forest, located within the Wellington Park boundary, is also a very special place for the local people of Collinsvale and adjacent areas. Questions generated in conducting the SDP are: Which group of people is the most important to be included in the planning process? Which group should the process primarily serve? Whose concerns and preferences should a planning process reflect and fulfil? Both local and outside interests were incorporated in the Myrtle Forest process, but in the case of the broader Hobart region to a very limited extent. Clearly, overwhelming preference was given to local communities. Though it can be argued that representatives from the Trust, the PWS, and to a limited extent from GCC could represent wider interests, these are too allied to authority.

It remains a challenge for small scale planning processes for areas with importance at different levels as to how such levels can be represented. In my view, representatives from a wider pool of stakeholders, where relevant, could be sought to sit on a steering committee, for instance.

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PERSONAL COMMUNICATIONS

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Inspiring Place Work Program

(Source: Inspiring Place, 2003)

Work Program Stage 1: Myrtle Forest Picnic Area Site Development Plan

Phase	Key Tasks	Responsibility	Target for Completion
1 Initial briefing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting with Steering Group • Site visit with Steering Group • Preparation of base maps • Provision of relevant background reports • Preparation of Work Program 	IP, UTas and Steering Group	Mid August 2003
2 Research and Fieldwork	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of available reports, policies and other relevant information sources • Team site visits • Undertake site survey investigations to assess site conditions (natural, cultural values), values and use 	UTas to take lead on report review, site investigations but with IP involvement and assistance. UTas and IP joint site visits.	Early September 2003
3 Stakeholder Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake site surveys/interviews to identify current use levels and expected user requirements • Discussions with neighbours • Meeting with Collinsvale Community Precinct • Contact with key agencies (e.g. PWS, Hobart Water, GCC) • Contact with known user groups • Arrange community walk 	Surveys/interviews to be conducted by UTas but with design input by IP. IP to lead/assist with all other community consultation	Early October 2003
4 Issues and Options Identification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify key issues • Assessment of issues and identify options for avoiding, reducing or mitigating impacts • Meeting with Steering Group to discuss options 	IP to document issues and options assessment with involvement of UTas. Presentation to Steering Committee for discussion	Late October 2003
5 Draft Site Development Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare draft site development plan and layout concept plan for Steering Group review and comment • Meeting with Steering Group • Revise draft Plan as may be required 	IP to prepare draft site development plan and layout concept plan	Mid December 2003

**Appendix B: Information Sheet and Questionnaire for
Myrtle Forest Site Development Plan**



Information Sheet

Questionnaire: Myrtle Forest Picnic Area Site Development Plan *General Site Users*

This information sheet is yours to keep. It provides you with the details of the research and persons to contact for further information and or any concerns you may have about the conduct of the research.

Title of investigation

Site Users and Community Values and Aspirations for the Myrtle Forest Picnic Area

Name of Chief Investigator:

Dr Jim Russell

Name of primary researcher

Supaporn Ingkhaninan

As a user of the Myrtle Forest picnic area we are inviting you to participate in developing a Site Development Plan for the Myrtle Forest Picnic Area.

What is the purpose of the study?

This study is being undertaken as part of the requirements of Supaporn Ingkhaninan's Master of Applied Sciences in Environmental Studies at the University of Tasmania. Its primary focus is to investigate a community and user-based Site Development Plan for the Myrtle Forest Picnic Area. In collaboration with Glenorchy City Council, Parks and Wildlife Service, Wellington Park Management Trust, Hobart Water and Inspiring Place Consultants, the project aims to find out from the users, community, and key agencies the level of use and their aspirations for the future of the Myrtle Forest Picnic Area. The data obtained from the study will be applied to the proposed Site Development Plan.

Who is being invited to participate?

People who are being selected to participate in this research include those people who use the Myrtle Forest Picnic Area, community members who live near Myrtle Forest Picnic Area (visitors, local users and walking club members), members of the Collinsvale Precinct and key agencies responsible for the management of the Myrtle Forest Picnic Area.

Please turn over . . .

What is involved if I chose to participate?

You will be asked to fill out a questionnaire asking how you use Myrtle Forest Picnic Area, what you value about the Myrtle Forest Picnic Area, how others use this area and what are some of the negative impacts on the community generated by such use of the Myrtle Forest Picnic Area and how you would like to see the Myrtle Forest Picnic Area managed in the future. The questionnaire will take about 15 minutes.

Will my comments be anonymous?

All responses to the questionnaire will be completely anonymous

Your participation in the project is entirely voluntary, and you have the choice not to participate, or not to answer any question.

All information provided by participant will be treated as confidential and information acquired will not be revealed to others in any form that may identify its source. All information will be kept in a secure location. Five years after the research, all hard copies of raw data, such as questionnaire will be shredded.

This project has received ethical approval from the Southern Tasmania Social Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any concerns of an ethical nature or complaints about how the project was conducted, please feel free to contact either:

1. Chair of the Southern Tasmania Social Sciences Human Resources Ethics Committee
-A/Professor Gino DalPont, (03) 6226 2078; or
2. The Executive Officer: Amanda McAully, (03) 6226 2763

If you have any questions pertaining to the study itself or you require any additional information, please feel free to contact the Chief Investigator, **Dr. Jim Russell** on (03) 6226 2835, or Investigator, **Supaporn Ingkhaninan** on (03) 6226 2839.

The findings of this research will be available in March 2004. If you would like a copy of the significant findings of this research project please contact Supaporn or Dr Jim Russell who will forward the information to you.

Questionnaire for Site Users: Myrtle Forest Site Development Planning 2003/04

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Q.1 You are (tick those that apply)

a member of Collinsvale Precinct Committee	
living at Myrtle Forest Road	
a member of Hobart Walking Club Inc / other walking clubs	
none of the above	

Q.2 You are living in (tick one)

Collinsvale	
Molesworth	
Glenisk	
Other (please specify)	

Q.3 Please tick (tick one)

I have visited the Myrtle Forest Picnic Area	
I have never visited the Myrtle Forest Picnic Area	

Q.4 How long have you been visiting the Myrtle Forest Picnic Area or passing through it on a walk? (tick one)

less than 1 year	
1-2 years	
3-4 years	
4-5 years	
more than 5 years	

Q.5 How often have you visited the area in the last 12 months?

--

Q.6 What time of year did you visit the area? (tick those that apply)

spring	
summer	
autumn	
winter	

Q.7 How long do you normally spend at the site on each visit? (tick one)

1-2 hours	
3-4 hours	
half a day	
all day	
overnight	

Q.8 Who do you most often visit the area with? (tick one)

	Family	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Friends	<input type="checkbox"/>
	School	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q.9 By what means do you normally travel to Myrtle Forest? (tick one)

	Car	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Walk	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Bus	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Bike	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Horse	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Others (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q.10 What are the main activities that you undertake when visiting the Myrtle Forest Picnic Area? (tick those that apply)

	Picnicing	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Short Walks	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Horse-riding	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Camping	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Collins Cap/Collins Bonnet Walk	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Bike riding	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Access point to other Wellington Park walking tracks	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Field trip with school	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Exercise	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Appreciate Nature/Scenery/Views	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Socialising	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Bird Watching	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Photography	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Outdoor education trip	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Nature observing such as plant community and animal life	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q.11 From the previous question, please list in order of preference up to 5 main activities you enjoy most in the area, if applicable.

1	<input type="text"/>
2	<input type="text"/>
3	<input type="text"/>
4	<input type="text"/>
5	<input type="text"/>

Q.12 Why do you choose the Myrtle Forest Picnic Area for the activities you indicated? (tick those that apply)

	Proximity to home (Closeness)	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Explore new area	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Easy Access	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q.13 What other activities could the site offer or would you like to be able to do at Myrtle Forest?

Q.14 How would you rate the quality of the existing facilities at Myrtle Forest? (tick one)

	very poor	<input type="checkbox"/>
	poor	<input type="checkbox"/>
	fair	<input type="checkbox"/>
	good	<input type="checkbox"/>
	very good	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q.15 Do you consider the visitor facilities at the Myrtle Forest Picnic Area should be improved?

	Yes (go to Q.18)	<input type="checkbox"/>
	No (go to Q.19)	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q.16 How could the facilities or the site be improved?

Q.17 What sort of facilities would you like to see improved or added in the Myrtle Forest Picnic Area? (tick those that apply)

	Toilet Block	<input type="checkbox"/>
	BBQ facilities	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Picnic Shelters	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Car Parking Spaces	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Short Walking Tracks	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Site Information and Interpretation	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Bike Parking Spaces	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Horse-riding Track	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Playground	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Disabled Access	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Walking track to Collins Bonnet and Collins Cap	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q.18 From the previous question, please rank up to three facilities which are the most important for you.

1

2

3

Q.19 Do you see any of the following impacts occurring when you visit Myrtle Forest?
(tick those that apply)

Robbush dumping	<input type="checkbox"/>
Erosion	<input type="checkbox"/>
Impacts on native animals	<input type="checkbox"/>
Impacts on native flora	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vandalism	<input type="checkbox"/>
Too many people	<input type="checkbox"/>
Conflicts or bad encounters with other users	<input type="checkbox"/>
Inadequate parking space	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q.20 Please provide more details on the key impact(s) affecting your enjoyment of the Myrtle Forest Picnic Area.

Q.21 What or who do you think is causing the problem?

Q.22 Can you suggest any solutions to reduce the impact(s)?

Q.23 Would you be prepared to participate in improving the picnic area?

Yes (go to Q. 24)	<input type="checkbox"/>
No (go to Q. 25)	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q.24 If so, please indicate your ideas about how you could participate, e.g., working bees to pull out weeds.

Q.25 Please respond to the following statements (strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree)

	SD	D	N	A	SA
There should be some short walking tracks (circuit) so that users who have not much time can experience the Myrtle Forest.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Access for people with mobility difficulties or disabilities should be provided along the short walking tracks and the picnic area, where possible.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
There should be an interpretation sign at the beginning of the walking track, providing information on track conditions, level of experience required, and other information.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
There should be a viewing platform and seats somewhere on the track.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
There should be information and interpretation, perhaps signs, about the features of the area.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q.26 How important is the Myrtle Forest?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Not important at all
<input type="checkbox"/>	Not very important
<input type="checkbox"/>	Important
<input type="checkbox"/>	Very important

Q.27 In what way is It important to you?

Q.28 In what way do you think the Myrtle Forest is important to others?

Q.29 Are there any other comments you would like to make about your reactions to visiting the Myrtle Forest?

Q.30 What is your age group?

	16-20	<input type="checkbox"/>
	21-30	<input type="checkbox"/>
	31-40	<input type="checkbox"/>
	41-50	<input type="checkbox"/>
	51-65	<input type="checkbox"/>
	65+	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q.31 Are you

	male	<input type="checkbox"/>
	female	<input type="checkbox"/>

Thank you for your time and assistance. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

**Appendix C: Information Sheet, Consent Form and
Questions for Myrtle Forest Site Development
Plan Key Agency Interviews**

Information Sheet



UNIVERSITY
OF TASMANIA

Questionnaire/Interview: Myrtle Forest Picnic Area Site Development Plan *Key Informants*

This information sheet is yours to keep. It provides you with the details of the research and persons to contact for further information and or any concerns you may have about the conduct of the research.

Title of investigation

Site Users and Community Values and Aspirations for the Myrtle Forest Picnic Area

Name of Chief Investigator:

Dr Jim Russell

Name of primary researcher

Supaporn Ingkhaninan

As a key informant in the management of the Myrtle Forest Picnic Area we are inviting you to participate in developing a Site Development Plan for the Myrtle Forest Picnic Area.

What is the purpose of the study?

This study is being undertaken as part of the requirements of Supaporn Ingkhaninan's Master of Applied Sciences in Environmental Studies at the University of Tasmania. Its primary focus is to investigate a community and user-based Site Development Plan for the Myrtle Forest Picnic Area. In collaboration with Glenorchy City Council, Parks and Wildlife Service, Wellington Park Management Trust, Hobart Water and Inspiring Place Consultants, the project aims to find out from the users, community, and key agencies the level of use and their aspirations for the future of the Myrtle Forest Picnic Area. The data obtained from the study will be applied to the proposed Site Development Plan.

Who is being invited to participate?

People who are being selected to participate in this research include those people who use the Myrtle Forest Picnic Area, community members who live near Myrtle Forest Picnic Area (visitors, local users and walking club members), members of the Collinsvale Precinct and key agencies responsible for the management of the Myrtle Forest Picnic Area.

Please turn over...

What is involved if I chose to participate?

Participation in this research will involve an interview of no longer than one hour. You will be asked questions about the roles and responsibilities of your agency in relation to the Myrtle Forest Picnic Area, known values of the area, and current and future plans for the management of the area. With your permission the interview will be tape-recorded. If you would rather the interview was not recorded please tell the interviewer and she will take written notes instead.

Will my comments be anonymous?

Yes. Your comments may appear in the final report, but to ensure your anonymity, they will not be associated with your name. If after the interview you have concerns about your comments you are encouraged to contact the interviewer should you wish them edited or removed from the interview notes.

Can I withdraw if I want to?

Participation in the project is entirely voluntary, and you have the choice not to participate, not to answer any question asked, or to withdraw from participation at any time, without prejudice. If you choose to participate, you will be asked to sign an informed consent form. The investigators will ensure that confidentiality and anonymity is ensured.

All information provided by participant will be treated as confidential and information acquired will not be revealed to others in any form that may identify its source. All information will be kept in a secure location. Five years after the research, all hard copies of raw data, such as interview transcripts and interview tapes will be shredded and destroyed.

This project has received ethical approval from the Southern Tasmania Social Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any concerns of an ethical nature or complaints about how the project was conducted, please feel free to contact either:

3. Chair of the Southern Tasmania Social Sciences Human Resources Ethics Committee
-A/Professor Gino DalPont, (03) 6226 2078; or
4. The Executive Officer: Amanda McAully, (03) 6226 2763

If you have any questions pertaining to the study itself or you require any additional information, please feel free to contact the Chief Investigator, **Dr. Jim Russell** on (03) 6226 2835, or Investigator, **Supaporn Ingkhaninan** on (03) 6226 2839.

The findings of this research will be available in March 2004. If you would like a copy of the significant findings of this research project please contact Supaporn or Dr Jim Russell who will forward the information to you.

Consent Form for Key Informants

Site Users and Community Values and Aspirations for the Myrtle Forest Picnic Area

1. I have read and understood the 'Information Sheet' for this study.
2. The nature and possible effects of the study have been explained to me.
3. I understand that the study involves a tape-recorded interview of approximately 30 minutes, duration during which I will be asked about my professional opinion on a number of issues related to the Myrtle Forest Picnic Area.
4. I understand that there will be no risk above the everyday norm by participating in this research, as any information I provided will be treated as confidential and my anonymity will be protected.
5. I understand that all research data will be securely stored on the University of Tasmania premises for a period of 5 years. The data will be destroyed at the end of 5 years.
6. Any questions that I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction.
7. I agree the research data gathered for the study may be published provided that I cannot be identified as a subject.
8. I agree to participate in this investigation and understand that I may withdraw at any time without any effect to family and myself.

Name of participant.....

Signature of participant.....Date.....

9. I have explained this project and the implications of participation in it to this volunteer and I believe that the consent is informed and that he/she understands the implications of participation.

Name of investigator.....

Signature of investigator.....Date.....

Questions for Key Informants: Myrtle Forest Site Development Planning

1. What role and responsibility, if any, does your agency have for the Myrtle Forest Picnic Area?
2. What values of the Myrtle Forest Picnic Area are known or considered important to this agency?
3. What works or plans, if any, have been prepared in the past 10 years that may be relevant to the future planning of Myrtle Forest Picnic Area?
4. What works or plans, if any, have been identified for Myrtle Forest Picnic Area in the future?
5. Do you have any other comments on the future planning, development and management of the Myrtle Forest Picnic Area?

**Appendix D: Examples of Observation Data Sheet and
Evaluation Data Sheet**

Observation Data Sheet

Title: Community Walk
Date/Time: 6th January 2004-6.30 pm
Site: Myrtle Forest Picnic Area

Presents:

Michael Nunn (Collinsvale), Craig Woodfield (Collinsvale), Lea Newman (Collinsvale), Sally Bryant (Fairly Glen Road), Jenny Dyring (Fairly Glen Road), Ian Houshold (Fairly Glen Road), Ian Wade (Collinsvale Road), John Anderson (Glenlusk), John Hepper (Inspiring Place), Jim Russell (University of Tasmania), Supaporn Ingkhaninan (Tuke) (University of Tasmania)

Most of these are locals residing in Collinsvale, and they were members of the Collinsvale Precinct Committee, immediate neighbours from the Myrtle Forest Road, and other locals who were interested in the development of the site.

Who was involved:

University of Tasmania, Inspiring Place Consultant, Collinsvale/Glenlusk community.

How was the event advertised:

The Community Walk was advertised by posting information about place and time for the activities in the window of the Collinsvale shop three weeks before the event took place. An invitation to the wider Collinsvale and Glenlusk community was included in the poster.

Purpose of the activities in overall process:

To gain opinion on aspirations for future development of the site from local community.

Nature of the activity:

The walk took place at the upper car park at Myrtle Forest and then moved to the lower car park as the discussion went on. John Hepper led the talk by introducing the study team, addressing the initiation of the project, how the University of Tasmania become involved, and the survey that I am conducting. He then introduced issues that he was aware of and to be addressed in the SDP. The local residents were asked to raise concerns that needed to be addressed.

Issues Discussed:

John Hepper addressed the use of the car parks, anti-social behaviours and misuse of the area, walking track improvements such as attention to the drainage system and soil erosion, site information on the walking tracks and features of the site, the improvement of the picnic shelter, and the addition of toilets.

The locals suggested: environmentally friendly toilets, restricted vehicle access, and an end to illegal camping.

Outcomes:

- **Issues resolved:** Not applicable
- **Issues outstanding:**

The locals proposed that the area should be for pedestrians only. Cars should be restricted to the lower car park and Myrtle Forest accessed by walking. A major new alternative proposed by one of the local people was to use a piece of land that belongs to him, one of the immediate neighbours, for a car park about 15 minutes walk down the road from the picnic area. A boom gate should be constructed to prevent cars from going further. Access to Myrtle Forest for people with mobility difficulties or for an emergency purpose could be by collecting the boom gate key from persons and at a place designated for the purpose. The lower car park could be used as a picnic area, and walkers could enjoy the walk up the existing road to the present picnic area.

John and study team need to do more fieldwork on the new option.

Evaluation Data Sheet

Type of consultation: Community consultation process

Problems during the process: None; worked smoothly

Comments on how the activities fit with the whole process:

Very good, participants had good responses on the site and suggested the new idea of road closure and a new parking area. Every participant was interested in the process and spoke up. John gave them full opportunity to talk.

How well this activity fits with the process of producing the SDP:

Very well, because it provided local people a forum to express their concerns and interest freely. Group dynamics worked well in this situation because it brought out the topics of discussion.

Observations

Facilitation:

John Hepper explained the background of the project then raised his ideas of how to solve those issues and asked the locals for comment. He asked local residents if there were other concerns.

Participation level:

High: everyone gained an opportunity to talk and expressed their ideas.

How was participation recorded:

John recorded all information himself during the process.

Appendix E: Myrtle Forest Species List 2003

(Source: Bryant, 2003)

Myrtle Forest Picnic Site Collinsvale

Species List 2003

Status Code

e = endemic to Tasmania
n = native
b = breeding
T = threatened (in Tas or Nat)
f = feral / exotic
i = native introduced establishing

Abundance Code

c = common
l = localised
s = seasonal / migratory
r = rare / uncommon / irregular

Birds	Status	Abund
Raptors & Night Birds		
Brown Goshawk	n	c
Grey Goshawk (white)	n b T	l
Collared Sparrowhawk	n b	c
Wedge-tailed Eagle	n T	l
Brown Falcon	n b	c
Southern Boobook	n b	c s
Tawny Frogmouth	n	r
Parrots & Cockatoos		
Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo	n	c
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	n	c
Green Rosella	n e	c
Forest and Understorey		
Bassian Thrush	n b	c

Brush Bronzewing	n b	c
Fan-tailed Cuckoo	n b	c s
Horsfield's Bronze-cuckoo	n b	c s
Shining Bronze-cuckoo	n b	c s
Laughing Kookaburra	i b	c
Superb Fairy-wren	n b	c
Spotted Pardalote	n b	c
Tasmanian Scrubwren	n e b	c
Tasmanian Thornbill	n e b	c
Yellow-rumped Thornbill	n	s
Yellow-throated Honeyeater	n e b	c
Strong-billed Honeyeater	n e b	c
Black-headed Honeyeater	n e b	c
Crescent Honeyeater	n b	c
New Holland Honeyeater	n b	c
Eastern Spinebill	n b	c
Scarlet Robin	n b	c
Flame Robin	n b	c
Pink Robin	n b	c
Olive Whistler	n b	c
Golden Whistler	n b	c
Grey Shrike-thrush	n b	c
Grey Fantail	n b	c
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	n	s
Black Currawong	n e b	c
Forest Raven	n	c
Silvereye	n b	c
Beautiful Firetail (finch)	n b	c
Common Exotics		
European Greenfinch	f b	c
European Goldfinch	f b	c
Common Blackbird	f b	c

MAMMALS	Status	Abund
Echidna	n b	c
Platypus	n b	l
Lesser long-eared bat	n	c
Swamp (velvet furred) rat	n	r
Long-tailed mouse	n e	r
Tasmanian devil	n e	r
Swamp antechinus	n b	r
Common wombat	n	r
Brushtail possum	n b	c
Ringtail possum	n b	c
Bennett's wallaby	n b	c
Pademelon	n b	c
Exotic Mammals		
Black rat	f b	c
House mouse	f b	c
Feral cat	f b	c
European Rabbit	f b	c
Reptiles, Frogs, Other		
Blue tongue lizard	n b	c
Tiger snake	n b	c
White-lipped Whip snake	n b	c
Metalic skink	n b	c
Ocellated skink	n b	c
Southern toadlet	n b	c
Brown froglet	n b	c
Common froglet	n b	c
Tasmanian froglet	n e b	c
Astacopsis tricornis	n b	c
Brown trout	f b	c
Galaxiid species	n b	c